

DANTE ALIGHIERI.

DANTE'S INFERNO

TRANSLATED BY

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FROM THE ORIGINAL OF

DANTE ALIGHIERI

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LIFE OF DANTE.

DANTE, a name abbreviated, as was the custom in those days, from Durante or Durando, was of a very ancient Florentine family.

Dante was born in Florence, May, 1265. His mother's name was Bella, but of what family is no longer known. His father he had the misfortune to lose in his childhood; but by the advice of his surviving relations, and with the assistance of an able preceptor, Brunetto Latini, he applied himself closely to polite literature and other liberal studies, at the same time that he omitted no pursuit necessary for the accomplishment of a manly character, and mixed with the youth of his age in all honorable and noble exercises.

In the twenty-fourth year of his age he was present at the memorable battle of Campaldino, where he served in the foremost troop of cavalry, and was exposed to imminent danger. In the following year Dante took part in another engagement between his countrymen and the citizens of Pisa, from whom they took the castle of Caprona.

From what the poet has told us in his treatise entitled the "Vita Nuova," we learn that he was a lover long before he was a soldier, and that his passion for the Beatrice whom he has immortalized commenced when she was at the beginning and he near the end of his ninth year. Their first meeting was at a banquet in the house of Folco Portinari, her father; and the impression then made on the susceptible and constant heart of Dante was not obliterated by her death, which happened after an interval of sixteen years.

But neither war nor love prevented Dante from gratifying the earnest desire which he had of knowledge and mental improvement. By Benvenuto da Imola, one of the earliest of his commentators, it is stated that he studied in his youth at the universities of Bologna and Padua, as well as in that of his native city, and devoted himself to the pursuit of natural and moral philosophy. Francesco da Buti, another of his commentators in the fourteenth century, asserts that he entered the order of the Frati Minori, but laid aside the habit before he was professed.

In his own city, domestic troubles, and yet more severe public calamities, awaited him. In 1291 he was induced, by the solicitation of his friends, to console himself for the loss of Beatrice by a matrimonial connection with Gemma, a lady of the noble family of the Donati, by whom he had a numerous offspring. But the violence of her temper proved a source of the

bitterest suffering to him. It is not improbable that political animosity might have had some share in these dissensions ; for his wife was a kinswoman of Corso Donati, one of the most formidable as he was one of the most inveterate of his opponents.

In 300 he was chosen chief of the Priors, who at that time possessed the supreme authority in the state ; his colleagues being Palmieri degli Altoviti and Neri di Jacopo degli Alberti. From this exaltation our poet dated the cause of all his subsequent misfortunes in life.

In order to show the occasion of Dante's exile, it may be necessary to enter more particularly into the state of parties at Florence. The city, which had been disturbed by many divisions between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, at length remained in the power of the former ; but after some time these were again split into two factions. This perverse occurrence originated with the inhabitants of Pistoia, who, from an unhappy quarrel between two powerful families in that city, were all separated into parties known by those denominations. With the intention of composing their differences, the principals on each side were summoned to the city of Florence ; but this measure, instead of remedying the evil, only contributed to increase its virulence, by communicating it to the people of Florence themselves. For the contending parties were so far from being brought to a reconciliation, that each contrived to gain fresh partisans among the Florentines, with whom many of them were closely connected by the ties of blood and friendship ; and who entered into the dispute with such acrimony and eagerness, that the whole city was soon engaged either on one part or the other. It was not long before they passed, by the usual gradations, from contumely to violence. The factions were now known by the names of the Neri and the Bianci, the former generally siding with the Guelphs or adherents of the Papal power, the latter with the Ghibellines, or those who supported the authority of the Emperor. The Neri assembled secretly in the Church of the Holy Trinity, and determined on interceding with Pope Boniface VIII. to send Charles of Valois to pacify and reform the city. No sooner did this resolution come to the knowledge of the Bianci, than, struck with apprehension at the consequences of such a measure, they took arms, and repaired to the Priors, demanding of them the punishment of their adversaries, for having thus entered into private deliberations concerning the state, which they represented to have been done with the view of expelling them from the city. Those who had met, being alarmed in their turn, had also recourse to arms, and made their complaints to the Priors. Accusing their opponents of having armed themselves without any previous public discussion, and affirming that, under various pretexts, they had sought to drive them out of their country, they demanded that they might be punished as disturbers of the public tranquillity.

The dread and danger became general, when, by the advice of Dante, the Priors called in the multitude to their protection and assistance, and then proceeded to banish the principals of the two factions, who were these : Corso Donati, Geri Spini, Giachonotto de' Pazzi, Rosso della Tosa, and others of the Neri party, who were exiled to the Castello della Pieve, in Perugia ; and of the Bianchi party, who were banished to Serrazana, Gentile and Torrigiano de Cerchi, Guido Cavalcanti, Baschiera della Tosa, Balduccio Adimari, Naldo, son of Lottino Gherardini, and others. On this occasion Dante was accused of favoring the Bianchi, though he appears to have conducted himself with impartiality ; and the deliberation held by the Neri for introducing Charles of Valois might, perhaps, have justified him in treating that party with greater rigor. The suspicion against him was increased, when those whom he was accused of favoring were soon after allowed to return from their banishment, while the sentence passed upon the other faction still remained in full force. To this Dante replied that when those who had been sent to Serrazana were recalled, he was no longer in office ; and that their return had been permitted on account of the death of Guido Cavalcanti, which was attributed to the unwholesome air of the place. The partiality which had been shown, however, afforded a pretext to the Pope for dispatching Charles of Valois to Florence, by whose influence a great reverse was soon produced in the public affairs ; the ex-citizens being restored to their place, and the whole of the Bianchi party driven into exile. At this juncture Dante was not in Florence, but at Rome, whether he had a short time before been sent ambassador to the Pope, with the offer of a voluntary return to peace and amity among the citizens. His enemies had now an opportunity of revenge, and, during his absence on this pacific mission, proceeded to pass an iniquitous decree of banishment against him and Palmieri Altoviti ; and at the same time confiscated his possessions, which, indeed, had been previously given up to pillage.

On hearing the tidings of his ruin, Dante instantly quitted Rome, and passed with all possible expedition to Sienna. Here, being more fully apprised of the extent of the calamity, for which he could see no remedy, he came to the desperate resolution of joining himself to the other exiles. His first meeting with them was at a consultation which they had at Gorgonza, a small castle subject to the jurisdiction of Arezzo, in which city it was finally, after a long deliberation, resolved that they should take up their station. Hither they accordingly repaired in a numerous body, made the Count Alessandro da Romena their leader, and appointed a council of twelve, of which number Dante was one. In the year 1304, having been joined by a very strong force, which was not only furnished them by Arezzo, but sent from Bologna and Pistoia, they made a sudden attack on the city of Florence, gained possession

of one of the gates, and conquered part of the territory, but were finally compelled to retreat without retaining any of the advantages they had acquired. Disappointed in this attempt to reinstate himself in his country, Dante quitted Arezzo; and his course is, for the most part, afterwards to be traced only by notices casually dropped in his own writings, or discovered in documents, which either chance or the zeal of antiquaries may have brought to light.

In the service of his last patron, Guido da Polenta, in whom he seems to have met with a more congenial mind than in any of the former, his talents were gratefully exerted, and his affections interested but too deeply; for having been sent by Guido on an embassy to the Venetians, and not being able even to obtain an audience, on account of the rancorous animosity with which they regarded that prince, Dante returned to Ravenna so overwhelmed with disappointment and grief, that he was seized by an illness that terminated fatally, either in July or September, 1321. Guido testified his sorrow and respect by the sumptuousness of his obsequies, and by his intention to erect a monument, which he did not live to complete. His countrymen showed, too late, that they knew the value of what they had lost. At the beginning of the next century, their posterity marked their regret by entreating that the immortal remains of their illustrious citizen might be restored to them, and deposited among the tombs of their fathers. But the people of Ravenna were unwilling to part with the sad and honorable memory of their own hospitality. No better success attended the subsequent negotiations of the Florentines for the same purpose, though renewed under the auspices of Leo X., and conducted through the powerful mediation of Michael Angelo.

The sepulchre designed and commenced by Guido da Polenta, was, in 1483, erected by Bernardo Bembo. A yet more magnificent memorial was raised so lately as the year 1770, by the Cardinal Gonzaga.

His children consisted of one daughter and five sons, two of whom, Pietro and Jacopo, inherited some of their father's abilities.

His daughter Beatrice became a nun in the convent of S. Stefano dell' Uliva, at Ravenna; and, among the entries of expenditure by the Florentine Republic, appears a present of ten golden florins sent to her in 1350, by the hands of Boccaccio, from the state.

It is but justice to the wife of Dante not to omit what Boccaccio relates of her: that after the banishment of her husband, she secured some share of his property from the popular fury, under the name of her dowry; that out of this she contrived to support their little family with exemplary discretion; and that she even removed from them the pressure of poverty, by such industrious efforts as in her former affluence she had never been called on to exert. Who does not regret, that with qualities so estimable, she wanted the sweetness of temper necessary for riveting the affections of her husband?

THE VISION OF DANTE.

H E L L .

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.

The writer, having lost his way in a gloomy forest, and being hindered by certain wild beasts from ascending a mountain, is met by Virgil, who promises to show him the punishments of Hell, and afterwards of Purgatory; and that he shall then be conducted by Beatrice into Paradise. He follows the Roman poet.

I N the midway of this our mortal life,
I found me in a gloomy wood, astray
Gone from the path direct: and e'en to tell,
It were no easy task, how savage wild
That forest, how robust and rough its growth,
Which to remember only, my dismay
Renews, in bitterness not far from death.
Yet, to discourse of what there good befell,
All else will I relate discover'd there.

How first I enter'd it I scarce can say,
Such sleepy dullness in that instant weigh'd
My senses down, when the true path I left;
But when a mountain's foot I reach'd, where closed
The valley that had pierced my heart with dread,
I look'd aloft, and saw his shoulders broad
Already vested with that planet's beam,
Who leads all wanderers safe through every way.

Then was a little respite to the fear,
That in my heart's recesses deep had lain
All of that night, so pitifully past:
And as a man, with difficult short breath,

Forespent with toiling, 'scaped from sea to shore,
 Turns to the perilous wide waste, and stands
 At gaze; e'en so my spirit, that yet fail'd,
 Struggling with terror, turn'd to view the straits
 That none hath past and lived. My weary frame
 After short pause re-comforted, again
 I journey'd on over that lonely steep,
 The hinder foot still firmer. Scarce the ascent
 Began, when, lo! a panther, nimble, light,
 And cover'd with a speckled skin, appear'd;
 Nor, when it saw me, vanish'd; rather strove
 To check my onward going; that ofttimes,
 With purpose to retrace my steps, I turn'd.

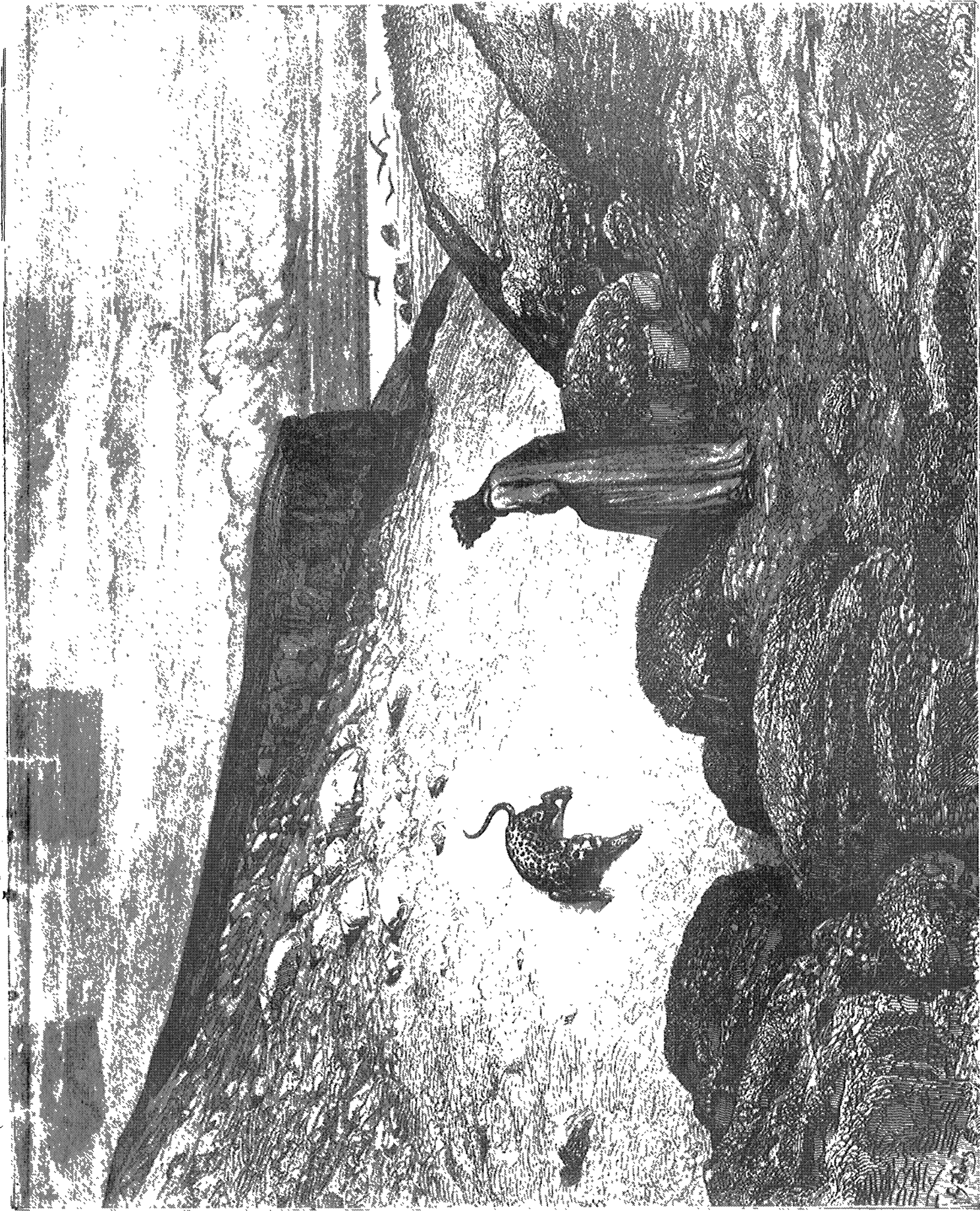
The hour was morning's prime, and on his way
 Aloft the sun ascended with those stars
 That with him rose when Love divine first moved
 Those its fair works; so that with joyous hope
 All things conspired to fill me, the gay skin
 Of that swift animal, the matin dawn,
 And the sweet season. Soon that joy was chased,
 And by new dread succeeded, when in view
 A lion came, 'gainst me as it appear'd,
 With his head held aloft, and hunger-mad,
 That e'en the air was fear-struck. A she-wolf
 Was at his heels, who in her leanness seem'd
 Full of all wants, and many a land hath made
 Disconsolate ere now. She with such fear
 O'erwhelm'd me, at the sight of her appall'd,
 That of the height all hope I lost. As one
 Who, with his gain elated, sees the time
 When all unwares is gone, he inwardly
 Mourns with heart-gripping anguish; such was I,
 Haunted by that fell beast, never at peace,
 Who coming o'er against me, by degrees
 Impell'd me where the sun in silence rests.

While to the lower space with backward step



In the midway of this our mortal life,
I found me in a gloomy wood, astray.

Canto I., lines 1, 2.

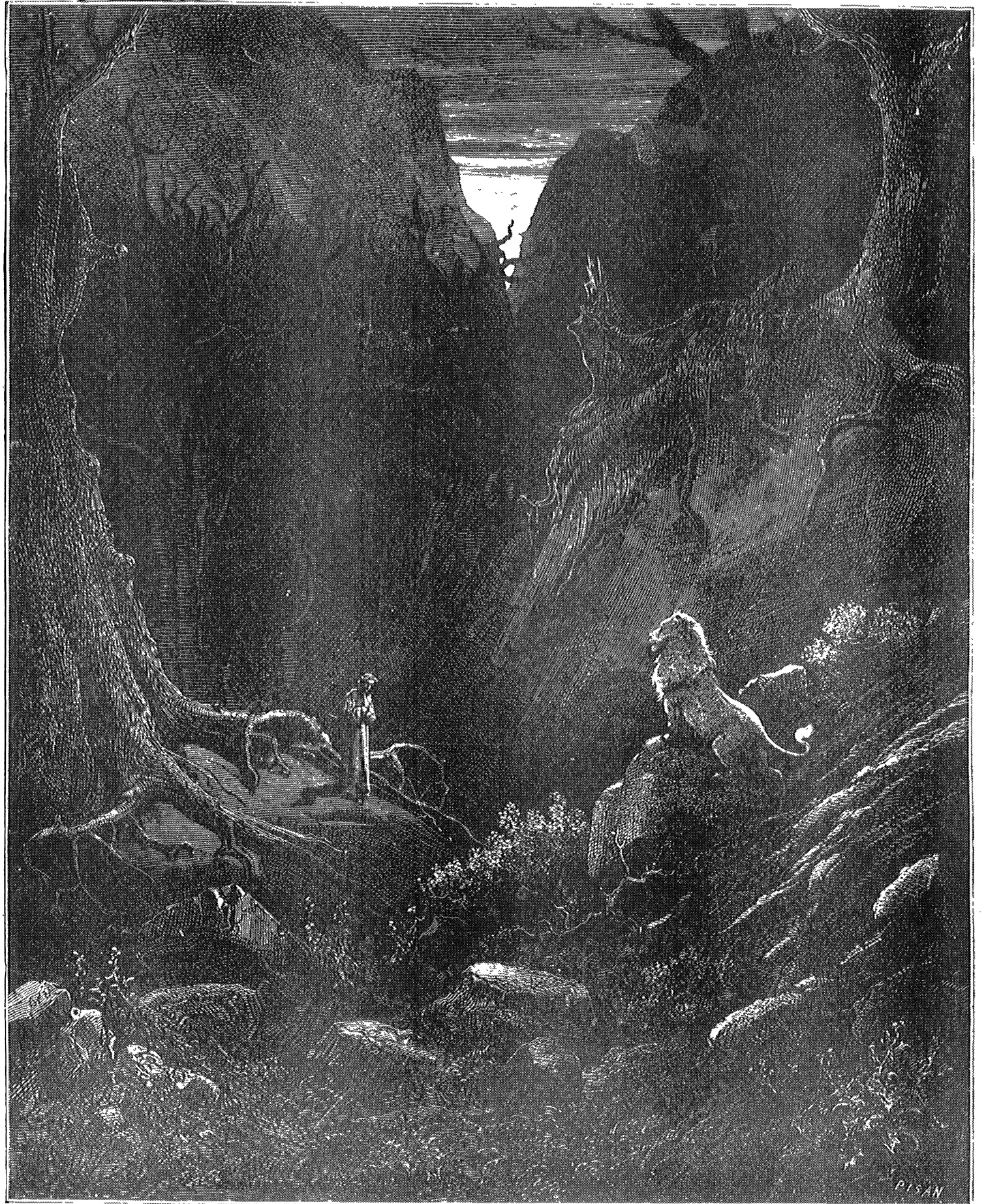


Scarce the ascent
Began, when, lo! a panther nimble, light,
And cover'd with a speckled skin, appear'd;

I fell, my ken discern'd the form of one
 Whose voice seem'd faint through long disuse of speech.
 When him in that great desert I espied,
 "Have mercy on me," cried I out aloud,
 "Spirit! or living man! whate'er thou be."

He answered: "Now not man, man once I was,
 And born of Lombard parents, Mantuans both
 By country, when the power of Julius yet
 Was scarcely firm. At Rome my life was past,
 Beneath the mild Augustus, in the time
 Of fabled deities and false. A bard
 Was I, and made Anchises' upright son
 The subject of my song, who came from Troy,
 When the flames prey'd on Ilium's haughty towers.
 But thou, say wherefore to such perils past
 Return'st thou? wherefore not this pleasant mount
 Ascendest, cause and source of all delight?"
 "And art thou then that Virgil, that well-spring,
 From which such copious floods of eloquence
 Have issued?" I with front abash'd replied.
 "Glory and light of all the tuneful train!
 May it avail me, that I long with zeal
 Have sought thy volume, and with love immense
 Have conn'd it o'er. My master thou, and guide!
 Thou he from whom alone I have derived
 That style, which for its beauty into fame
 Exalts me. See the beast, from whom I fled.
 Oh, save me from her, thou illustrious sage!
 For every vein and pulse throughout my frame
 She hath made tremble." He, soon as he saw
 That I was weeping, answer'd, "Thou must needs
 Another way pursue, if thou would'st 'scape
 From out that savage wilderness. This beast,
 At whom thou criest, her way will suffer none
 To pass, and no less hindrance makes than death:
 So bad and so accursed in her kind,
 That never sated is her ravenous will,
 Still after food more craving than before.

To many an animal in wedlock vile
 She fastens, and shall yet to many more,
 Until that greyhound come, who shall destroy
 Her with sharp pain. He will not life support
 By earth nor its base metals, but by love,
 Wisdom, and virtue; and his land shall be
 The land 'twixt either Feltro. In his might
 Shall safety to Italia's plains arise,
 For whose realm, fair Camilla, virgin pure,
 Nisus, Euryalus, and Turnus fell.
 He, with incessant chase, through every town
 Shall worry, until he to hell at length
 Restore her, thence by envy first let loose.
 I, for thy profit pondering, now devise
 That thou mayst follow me; and I, thy guide,
 Will lead thee hence through an eternal space,
 Where thou shalt hear despairing shrieks, and see
 Spirits of old tormented, who invoke
 A second death; and those next view, who dwell
 Content in fire, for that they hope to come,
 Whene'er the time may be, among the blest,
 Into whose regions if thou then desire
 To ascend, a spirit worthier than I
 Must lead thee, in whose charge, when I depart,
 Thou shalt be left: for that Almighty King,
 Who reigns above, a rebel to his law
 Adjudges me; and therefore hath decreed
 That, to his city, none through me shall come.
 He in all parts hath sway; there rules, there holds
 His citadel and throne. Oh, happy those,
 Whom there he chooses!" I to him in few:
 "Bard! by that God, whom thou didst not adore,
 I do beseech thee (that this ill and worse
 I may escape) to lead me where thou saidst,
 That I St. Peter's gate may view, and those
 Who, as thou tell'st, are in such dismal plight."
 Onward he moved, I close his steps pursued.



A lion came, 'gainst me as it appear'd,
With his head held aloft, and hunger-mad.

Canto I., lines 43, 44.



He soon as he saw
That I was weeping, answer'd.

Canto I., lines 87, 88.

CANTO II.

ARGUMENT.

After the invocation, which poets are used to prefix to their works, he shows that, on a consideration of his own strength, he doubted whether it sufficed for the journey proposed to him, but that, being comforted by Virgil, he at last took courage, and followed him as his guide and master.

NOW was the day departing, and the air,
Embrown'd with-shadows, from their toils released
All animals on earth; and I alone
Prepared myself the conflict to sustain,
Both of sad pity, and that perilous road,
Which my unerring memory shall retrace.

O Muses! Oh, high genius! now vouchsafe
Your aid. Oh, mind! that all I saw hast kept
Safe in a written record, here thy worth
And eminent endowments come to proof.

I thus began: "Bard! thou who art my guide,
Consider well, if virtue be in me
Sufficient, ere to this high enterprise
Thou trust me. Thou hast told that Silvius' sire,
Yet clothed in corruptible flesh, among
The immortal tribes had entrance, and was there
Sensibly present. Yet if heaven's great Lord,
Almighty foe to ill, such favor show'd
In contemplation of the high effect,
Both what and who from him should issue forth,
It seems in reason's judgment well deserved;
Sith he of Rome and of Rome's empire wide,
In heaven's empyreal height was chosen sire:
Both which, if truth be spoken, were ordain'd
And 'stablished for the holy place, where sits
Who to great Peter's sacred chair succeeds.

He from this journey, in thy song renown'd,
Learn'd things, that to his victory gave rise
And to the Papal robe. In after-times
The chosen vessel also travell'd there,
To bring us back assurance in that faith
Which is the entrance to salvation's way.
But I, why should I there presume? or who
Permits it? not Æneas I, nor Paul.
Myself I deem not worthy, and none else
Will deem me. I, if on this voyage then
I venture, fear it will in folly end.
Thou, who art wise, better my meaning know'st,
Than I can speak." As one, who unresolves
What he hath late resolved, and with new thoughts
Changes his purpose from his first intent
Removed; e'en such was I on that dun coast,
Wasting in thought my enterprise, at first
So eagerly embraced. "If right thy words
I scan," replied that shade magnanimous,
"Thy soul is by vile fear assail'd, which oft
So overcasts a man that he recoils
From noblest resolutions, like a beast
At some false semblance in the twilight gloom.
That from this terror thou mayst free thyself,
I will instruct thee why I came, and what
I heard in that same instant, when for thee
Grief touch'd me first, I was among the tribe,
Who rest suspended, when a dame, so blest
And lovely I besought her to command,
Call'd me; her eyes were brighter than the star
Of day; and she, with gentle voice and soft,
Angelically tuned, her speech address'd:
'Oh, courteous shade of Mantua! thou whose fame
Yet lives, and shall live long as Nature lasts!
A friend, not of my fortune but myself,
On the wide desert in his road has met

Hindrance so great, that he through fear has turn'd.
 Now much I dread lest he past help have stray'd,
 And I be risen too late for his relief,
 From what in heaven of him I heard. Speed now,
 And by thy eloquent persuasive tongue,
 And by all means for his deliverance meet,
 Assist him. So to me will comfort spring.
 I, who now bid thee on this errand forth,
 Am Beatrice; from a place I come
 Re-visited with joy. Love brought me thence,
 Who prompts my speech. When in my Master's sight
 I stand, thy praise to him I oft will tell.'

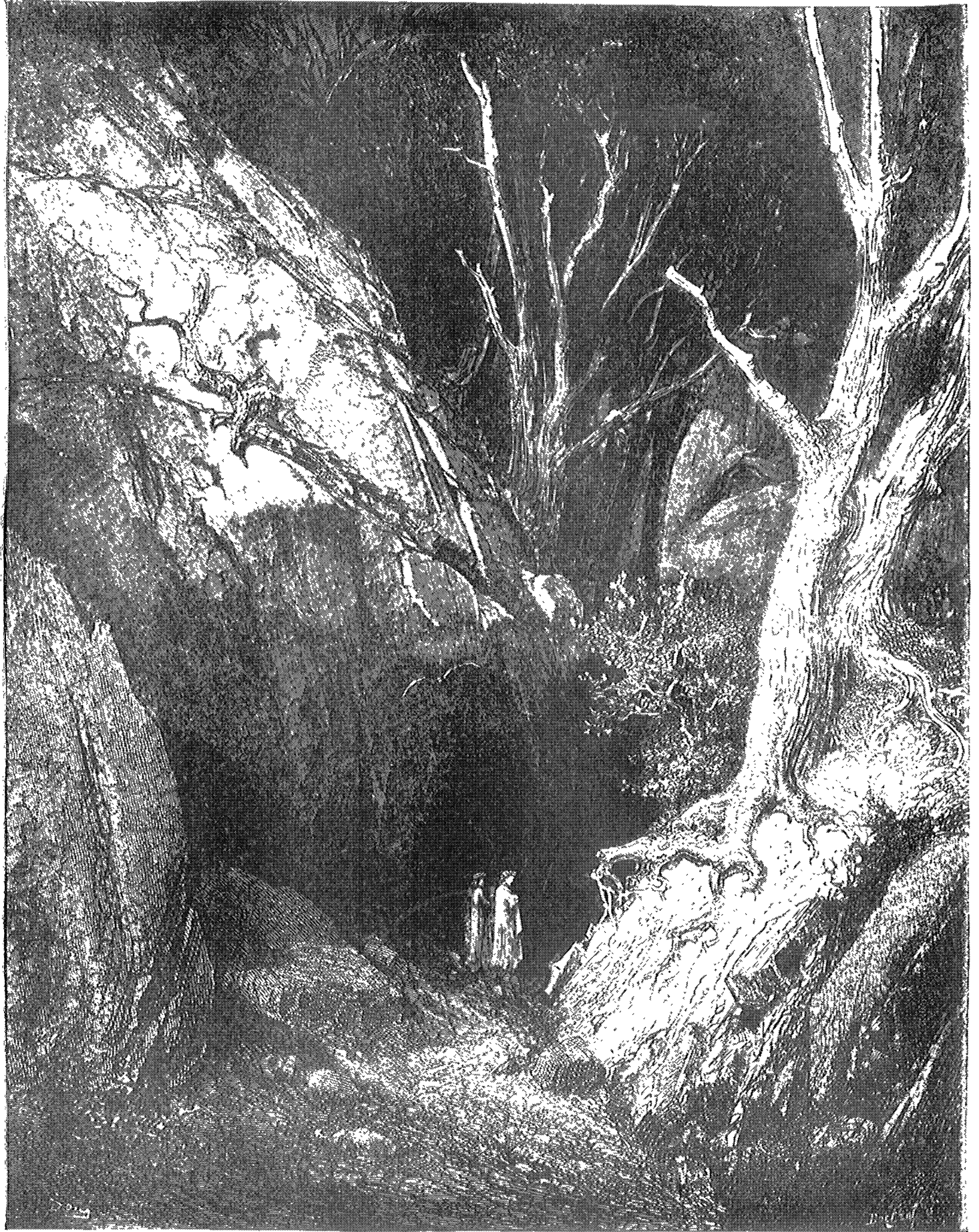
"She then was silent, and I thus began:
 'O Lady! by whose influence alone
 Mankind excels whatever is contain'd
 Within that heaven which hath the smallest orb,
 So thy command delights me, that to obey,
 If it were done already, would seem late.
 No need hast thou further to speak thy will:
 Yet tell the reason, why thou art not loth
 To leave that ample space, where to return
 Thou burnest, for this center here beneath.'

"She then: 'Since thou so deeply wouldst inquire,
 I will instruct thee briefly why no dread
 Hinders my entrance here. Those things alone
 Are to be fear'd whence evil may proceed;
 None else, for none are terrible beside.
 I am so framed by God, thanks to his grace!
 That any sufferance of your misery
 Touches me not, nor flame of that fierce fire
 Assails me. In high heaven a blessed dame
 Resides, who mourns with such effectual grief
 That hindrance, which I send thee to remove,
 That God's stern judgment to her will inclines.
 To Lucia calling, her she thus bespake:
 "Now doth thy faithful servant need thy aid,

And I commend him to thee." At her word
 Sped Lucia, of all cruelty the foe,
 And coming to the place, where I abode
 Seated with Rachel, her of ancient days,
 She thus address'd me: "Thou true praise of God!
 Beatrice! why is not thy succor lent
 To him, who so much loved thee, as to leave
 For thy sake all the multitude admires?
 Dost thou not hear how pitiful his wail,
 Nor mark the death, which in the torrent flood,
 Swollen mightier than a sea, him struggling holds?"
 Ne'er among men did any with such speed
 Haste to their profit, flee from their annoy,
 As, when these words were spoken, I came here,
 Down from my blessed seat, trusting the force
 Of thy pure eloquence, which thee, and all
 Who well have mark'd it, into honor brings.'

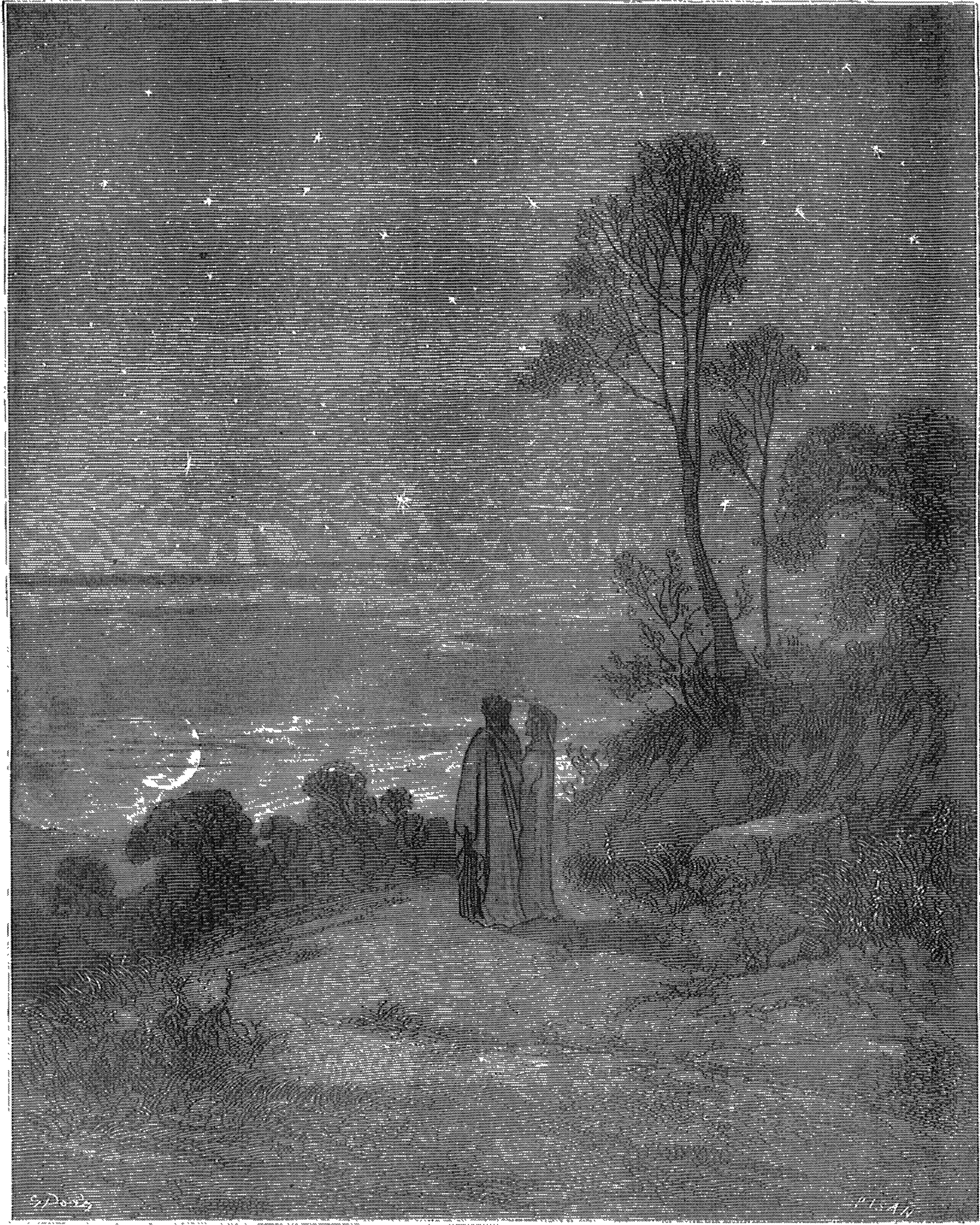
"When she had ended, her bright beaming eyes
 Tearful she turn'd aside; whereat I felt
 Redoubled zeal to serve thee. As she will'd,
 Thus am I come: I saved thee from the beast,
 Who thy near way across the goodly mount
 Prevented. What is this comes o'er thee then?
 Why, why dost thou hang back? why in thy breast
 Harbor vile fear? why hast not courage there,
 And noble daring; since three maids, so blest,
 Thy safety plan, e'en in the court of heaven;
 And so much certain good my words forbode?"

As florets, by the frosty air of night
 Bent down and closed, when day has blanch'd their leaves,
 Rise all unfolded on their spiry stems;
 So was my fainting vigor new restored,
 And to my heart such kindly courage ran,
 That I as one undaunted soon replied:
 "Oh, full of pity she, who undertook
 My succor! and thou kind, who didst perform



Onward he moved, I close his steps pursued.

Canto I., line 132.



Now was the day departing.

Canto II., line 1.

So soon her true behest! With such desire
Thou hast disposed me to renew my voyage,
That my first purpose fully is resumed.
Lead on: one only will is in us both.
Thou art my guide, my master thou, and lord.”
So spake I; and when he had onward moved,
I enter'd on the deep and woody way.

CANTO III.

ARGUMENT.

Dante, following Virgil, comes to the gate of Hell ; where, after having read the dreadful words that are written thereon, they both enter. Here, as he understands from Virgil, those were punished who had passed their time (for living it could not be called) in a state of apathy and indifference both to good and evil. Then pursuing their way, they arrive at the river Acheron ; and there find the old ferryman Charon, who takes the spirits over to the opposite shore ; which as soon as Dante reaches, he is seized with terror, and falls into a trance.

“**T**HROUGH me you pass into the city of woe :
Through me you pass into eternal pain :

Through me among the people lost for aye.

Justice the founder of my fabric moved :

To rear me was the task of power divine,

Supremest wisdom and primeval love.

Before me things create were none, save things

Eternal, and eternal I endure.

All hope abandon, ye who enter here.”

Such characters, in color dim, I mark'd

Over a portal's lofty arch inscribed.

Whereat I thus : “Master, these words import

Hard meaning.” He as one prepared replied :

“Here thou must all distrust behind thee leave ;

Here be vile fear extinguish'd. We are come

Where I have told thee we shall see the souls

To misery doom'd, who intellectual good

Have lost.” And when his hand he had stretch'd forth

To mine, with pleasant looks, whence I was cheer'd,

Into that secret place he led me on.

Here sighs, with lamentations and loud moans,

Resounded through the air pierced by no star,

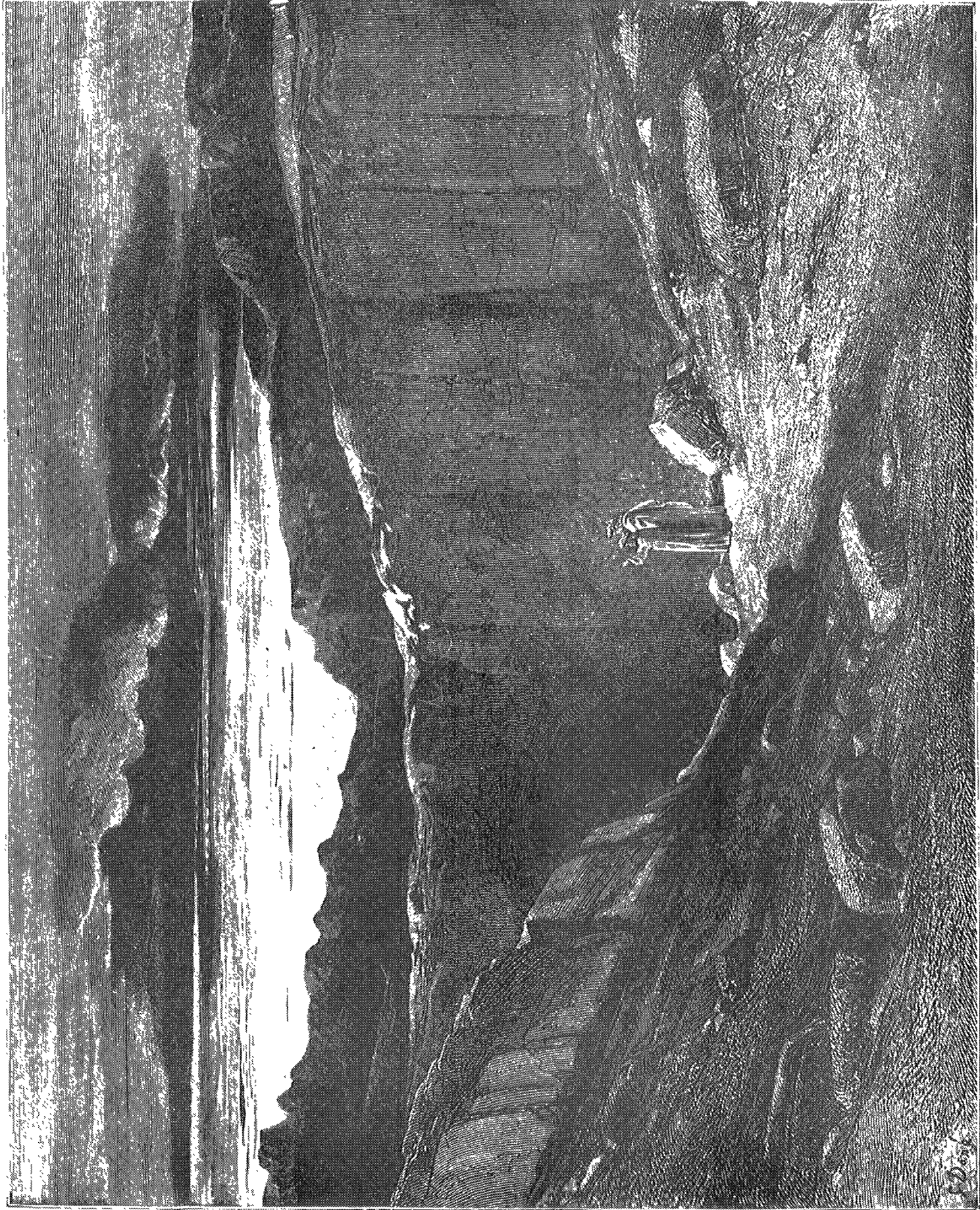
That e'en I wept at entering. Various tongues,

Horrible languages, outcries of woe,



I, who now bid thee on this errand forth,
Am Beatrice.

Canto II., lines 70, 71.



All hope abandon, ye who enter here.

Contra III., line 9

Accents of anger, voices deep and hoarse,
 With hands together smote that swell'd the sounds,
 Made up a tumult, that for ever whirls
 Round through that air with solid darkness stain'd,
 Like to the sand that in the whirlwind flies.
 I then, with error yet encompassed, cried,
 "Oh, master! what is this I hear? what race
 Are these, who seem so overcome with woe?"

He thus to me: "This miserable fate
 Suffer the wretched souls of those who lived
 Without or praise or blame, with that ill band
 Of angels mix'd, who nor rebellious proved,
 Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves
 Were only. From his bounds Heaven drove them forth,
 Not to impair his luster; nor the depth
 Of Hell receives them, lest the accursed tribe
 Should glory thence with exultation vain."

I then: "Master! what doth aggrieve them thus,
 That they lament so loud?" He straight replied:
 "That will I tell thee briefly. These of death
 No hope may entertain; and their blind life
 So meanly passes, that all other lots
 They envy. Fame of them the world hath none.
 Nor suffers; mercy and justice scorn them both.
 Speak not of them, but look, and pass them by."

And I, who straightway look'd, beheld a flag,
 Which whirling ran around so rapidly,
 That it no pause obtain'd: and following came
 Such a long train of spirits, I should ne'er
 Have thought that death so many had despoil'd.

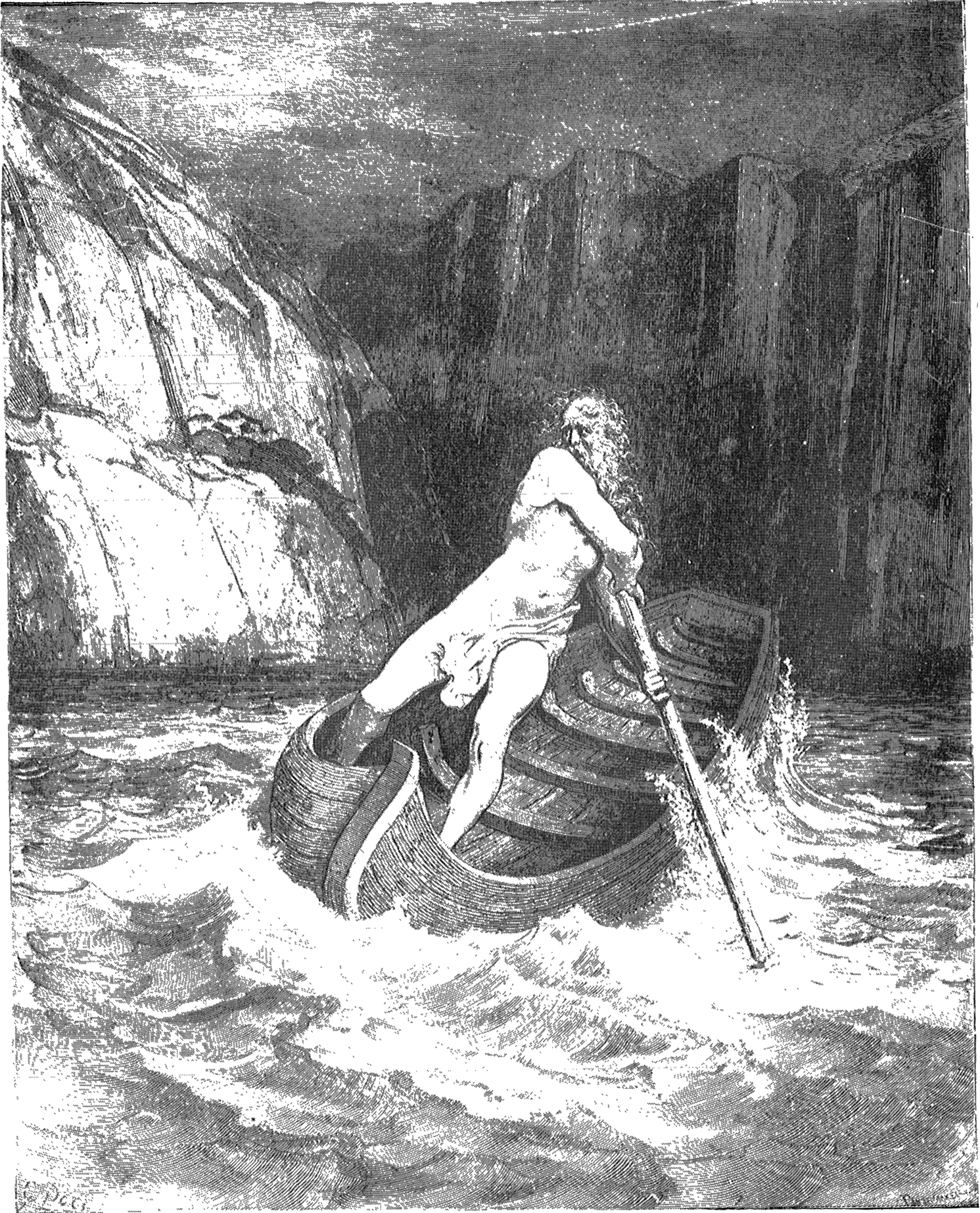
When some of these I recognized, I saw
 And knew the shade of him, who to base fear
 Yielding, abjured his high estate. Forthwith
 I understood, for certain, this the tribe
 Of those ill spirits both to God displeasing
 And to his foes. These wretches who ne'er lived,

Went on in nakedness, and sorely stung
By wasps and hornets, which bedew'd their cheeks
With blood, that, mix'd with tears, dropp'd to their feet,
And by disgustful worms was gather'd there.

Then looking further onwards, I beheld
A throng upon the shore of a great stream:
Whereat I thus: "Sir! grant me now to know
Whom here we view, and whence impell'd they seem
So eager to pass o'er, as I discern
Through the blear light?" He thus to me in few:
"This shalt thou know, soon as our steps arrive
Beside the woful tide of Acheron."

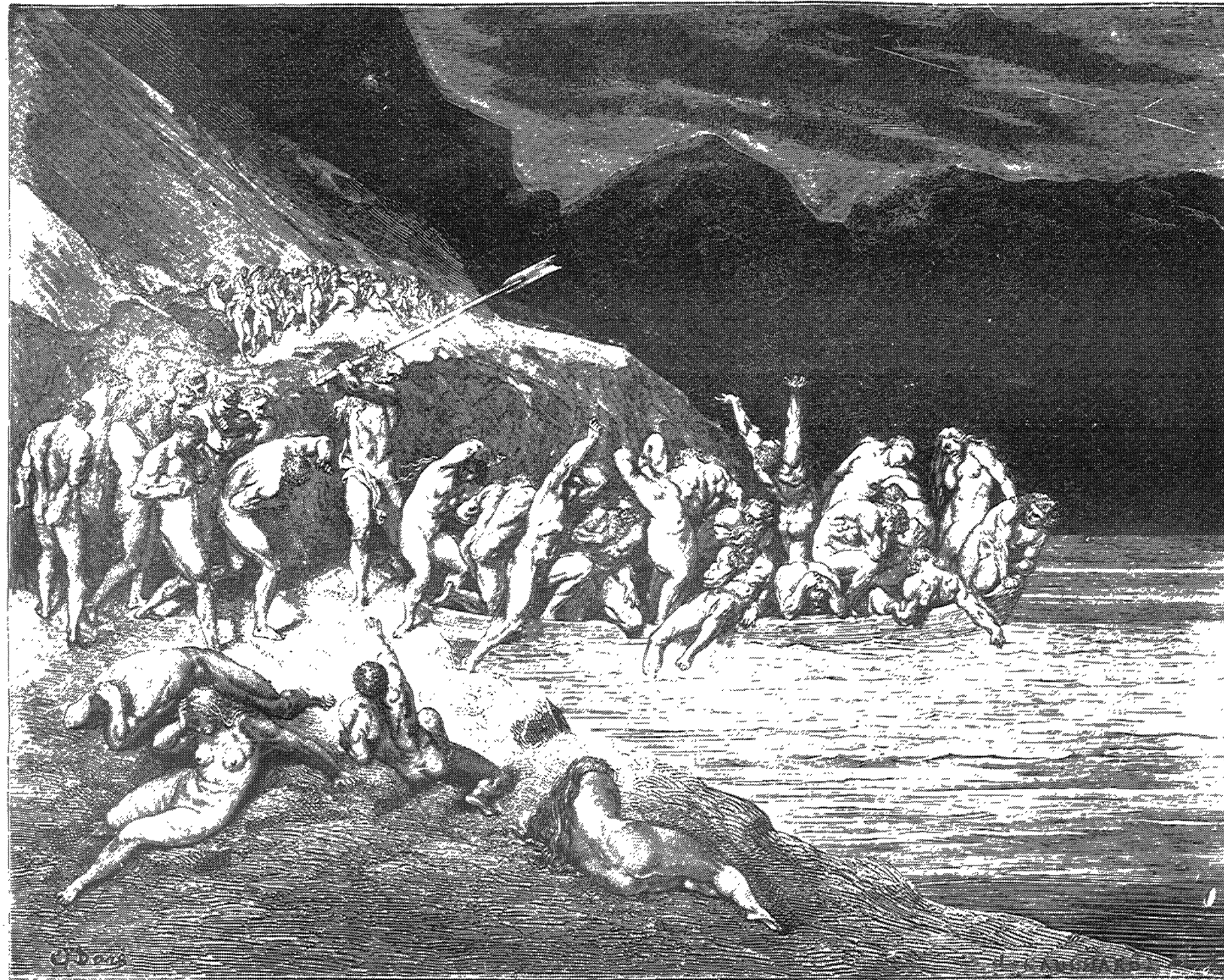
Then with eyes downward cast, and fill'd with shame,
Fearing my words offensive to his ear,
Till we had reach'd the river, I from speech
Abstain'd. And, lo! toward us in a bark
Comes on an old man, hoary white with eld,
Crying, "Woe to you, wicked spirits! hope not
Ever to see the sky again. I come
To take you to the other shore across,
Into eternal darkness, there to dwell
In fierce heat and in ice. And thou, who there
Standest, live spirit! get thee hence, and leave
These who are dead." But soon as he beheld
I left them not, "By other way," said he,
"By other haven shalt thou come to shore,
Not by this passage; thee a nimbler boat
Must carry." Then to him thus spake my guide:
"Charon! thyself torment not: so 'tis will'd,
Where will and power are one: ask thou no more."

Straightway in silence fell the shaggy cheeks
Of him, the boatman o'er the livid lake,
Around whose eyes glared wheeling flames. Meanwhile
Those spirits, faint and naked, color changed,
And gnash'd their teeth, soon as the cruel words
They heard. God and their parents they blasphemed,



And, lo! toward us in a bark
Comes on an old man, hoary white with eld,
Crying, "Woe to you, wicked spirits!"

Canto III., lines 76-78.



E'en in like manner Adam's evil brood
Cast themselves, one by one, down from the shore.

The human kind, the place, the time, and seed,
That did engender them and give them birth.

Then all together sorely wailing drew
To the curst strand, that every man must pass
Who fears not God. Charon, demoniac form,
With eyes of burning coal, collects them all,
Beckoning, and each, that lingers, with his oar
Strikes. As fall off the light autumnal leaves,
One still another following, till the bough
Strews all its honors on the earth beneath;
E'en like the manner Adam's evil brood
Cast themselves, one by one, down from the shore,
Each at a beck, as falcon at his call.

Thus go they over through the umber'd wave;
And ever they on the opposite bank
Be landed, on this side another throng
Still gathers. "Son," thus spake the courteous guide,
"Those who die subject to the wrath of God
All here together come from every clime,
And to o'erpass the river are not loth:
For so Heaven's justice goads them on, that fear
Is turned into desire. Hence ne'er hath past
Good spirit. If of thee Charon complain,
Now mayst thou know the import of his words."

This said, the gloomy region trembling shook
So terribly, that yet with clammy dews
Fear chills my brow. The sad earth gave a blast,
That, lightning, shot forth a vermilion flame,
Which all my senses conquer'd quite, and I
Down dropp'd, as one with sudden slumber seized.

CANTO IV.

ARGUMENT.

The Poet, being roused by a clap of thunder, and following his guide onwards, descends into Limbo, which is the first circle of Hell, where he finds the souls of those who, although they have lived virtuously, and have not to suffer for great sins, nevertheless, through lack of baptism, merit not the bliss of Paradise. Hence he is led on by Virgil to descend into the second circle.

BROKE the deep slumber in my brain a crash
Of heavy thunder, that I shook myself,
As one by main force roused. Risen upright,
My rested eyes I moved around, and search'd,
With fixed ken, to know what place it was
Wherein I stood. For certain, on the brink
I found me of the lamentable vale,
The dread abyss, that joins a thundrous sound
Of plaints innumerable. Dark and deep,
And thick with clouds o'erspread, mine eye in vain
Explored its bottom, nor could aught discern.

“Now let us to the blind world there beneath
Descend”; the bard began, all pale of look:
“I go the first, and thou shalt follow next.

Then I, his alter'd hue perceiving, thus:
“How may I speed, if thou yieldest to dread,
Who still art wont to comfort me in doubt?”

He then: “The anguish of that race below
With pity stains my cheek, which thou for fear
Mistakest. Let us on. Our length of way
Urges to haste.” Onward, this said, he moved;
And entering, led me with him, on the bounds
Of the first circle that surrounds the abyss.

Here, as mine ear could note, no plaint was heard
Except of sighs, that made the eternal air

Tremble, not caused by tortures, but of grief
 Felt by those multitudes, many and vast,
 Of men, women, and infants. Then to me
 The gentle guide: "Inquirest thou not what spirits
 Are these which thou beholdest? Ere thou pass
 Farther, I would thou know, that these of sin
 Were blameless; and if aught they merited,
 It profits not, since baptism was not theirs,
 The portal to thy faith. If they before
 The Gospel lived, they served not God aright;
 And among such am I. For these defects,
 And for no other evil, we are lost;
 Only so far afflicted, that we live
 Desiring without hope." Sore grief assail'd
 My heart at hearing this, for well I knew
 Suspended in that Limbo many a soul
 Of mighty worth. "Oh, tell me, sire revered!
 Tell me, my master!" I began through wish
 Of full assurance in that holy faith
 Which vanquishes all error; "say, did e'er
 Any, or through his own or other's merit,
 Come forth from thence, who afterward was blest?"

Piercing the secret import of my speech,
 He answer'd: "I was new to that estate,
 When I beheld a puissant one arrive
 Amongst us, with victorious trophy crown'd.
 He forth the shade of our first parent drew,
 Abel, his child, and Noah righteous man,
 Of Moses lawgiver for faith approved,
 Of patriarch Abraham, and David king,
 Israel with his sire and with his sons,
 Nor without Rachel whom so hard he won,
 And others many more, whom he to bliss
 Exalted. Before these, be thou assured,
 No spirit of human kind was ever saved."

We, while he spake, ceased not our onward road,

Still passing through the wood; for so I name
 Those spirits thick beset. We were not far
 On this side from the summit, when I kenn'd
 A flame, that o'er the darken'd hemisphere
 Prevailing shined. Yet we a little space
 Were distant, not so far but I in part
 Discovered that a tribe in honor high
 That place possess'd. "O thou, who every art
 And science valuest! who are these, that boast
 Such honor, separate from all the rest?"

He answer'd: "The renown of their great names,
 That echoes through the world above, acquires
 Favor in heaven, which holds them thus advanced."
 Meantime a voice I heard: "Honor the bard
 Sublime! his shade returns, that left us late!"
 No sooner ceased the sound, than I beheld
 Four mighty spirits toward us bend their steps,
 Of semblance neither sorrowful nor glad.

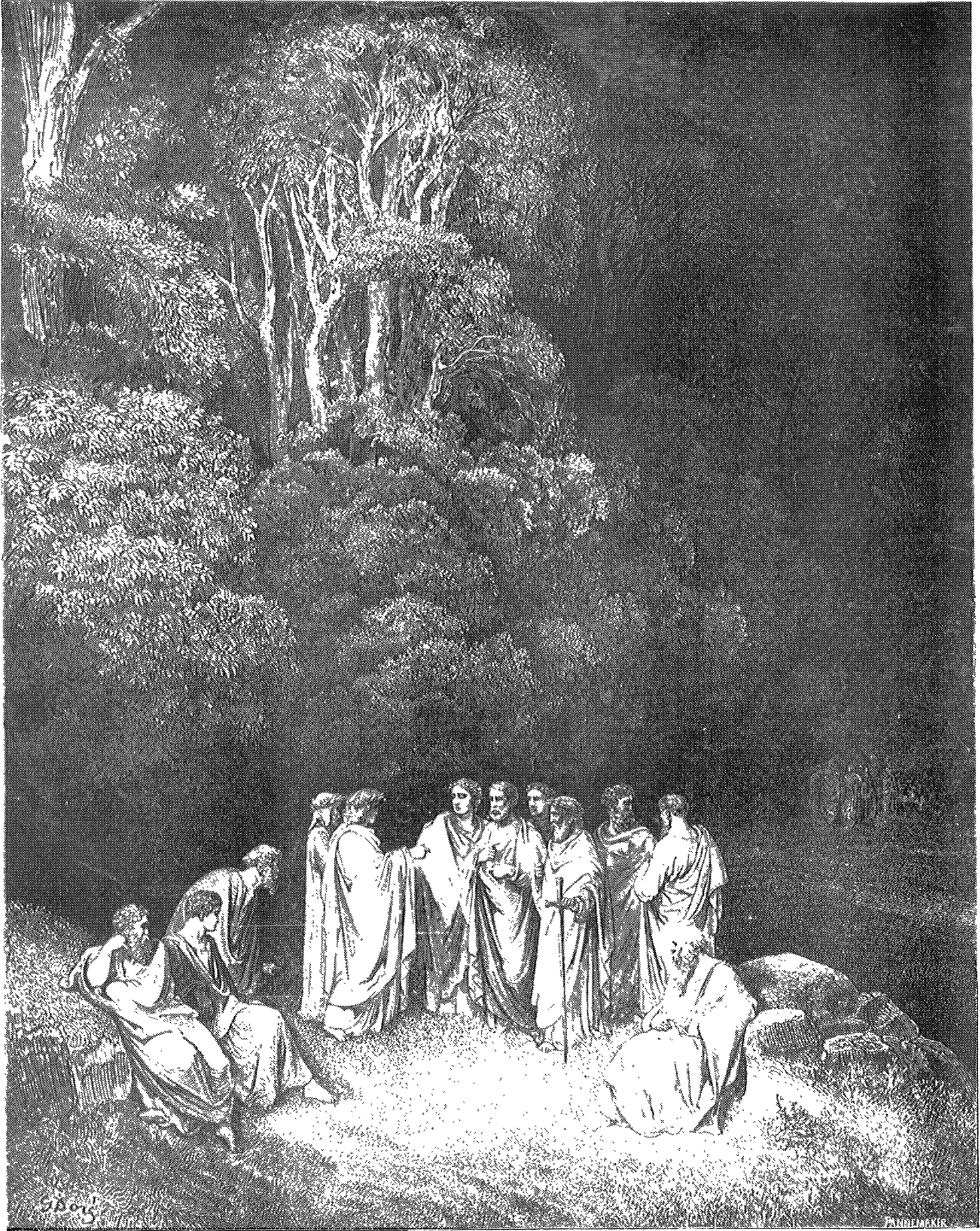
When thus my master kind began: "Mark him,
 Who in his right hand bears that falchion keen,
 The other three preceding, as their lord.
 This is that Homer, of all bards supreme:
 Flaccus, the next, in satire's vein excelling;
 The third is Naso; Lucan is the last.
 Because they all that appellation own,
 With which the voice singly accosted me,
 Honoring they greet me thus, and well they judge."

So I beheld united the bright school
 Of him the monarch of sublimest song,
 That o'er the others like an eagle soars.

When they together short discourse had held,
 They turned to me with salutation kind
 Beckoning me; at which my master smiled:
 Nor was this all; but greater honor still
 They gave me, for they made me of their tribe;
 And I was sixth amid so learn'd a band.



Only so far afflicted, that we live
Desiring without hope.



So I beheld united the bright school
Of him the monarch of sublimest song,
That o'er the others like an eagle soars.

Canto IV., lines 89-91.

Far as the luminous beacon on we pass'd,
 Speaking of matters then befitting well
 To speak, now fitter left untold. At foot
 Of a magnificent castle we arrived,
 Seven times with lofty walls begirt, and round
 Defended by a pleasant stream. O'er this
 As o'er dry land we pass'd. Next, through seven gates,
 I with those sages enter'd, and we came
 Into a mead with lively verdure fresh.

There dwelt a race, who slow their eyes around
 Majestically moved, and in their port
 Bore eminent authority; they spake
 Seldom, but all their words were tuneful sweet.

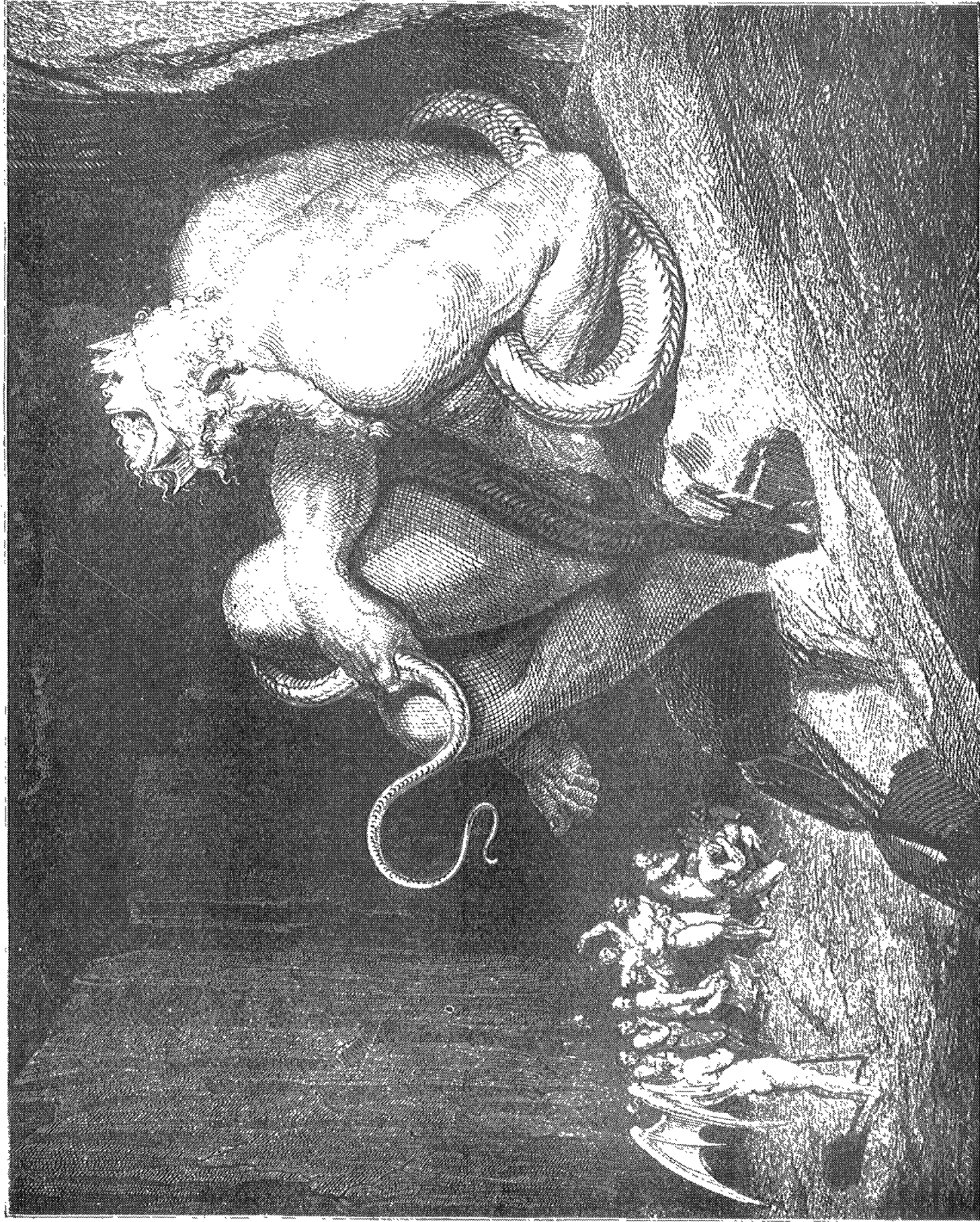
We to one side retired, into a place
 Open, and bright, and lofty, whence each one
 Stood manifest to view. Incontinent,
 There on the green enamel of the plain
 Were shown me the great spirits, by whose sight
 I am exalted in my own esteem.

Electra there I saw accompanied
 By many, among whom Hector I knew,
 Anchises' pious son, and with hawk's eye
 Cæsar all armed, and by Camilla there
 Penthesilea. On the other side,
 Old King Latinus seated by his child
 Lavinia, and that Brutus I beheld
 Who Tarquin chased, Lucretia, Cato's wife
 Marcia, with Julia and Cornelia there;
 And sole apart retired, the Soldan fierce.

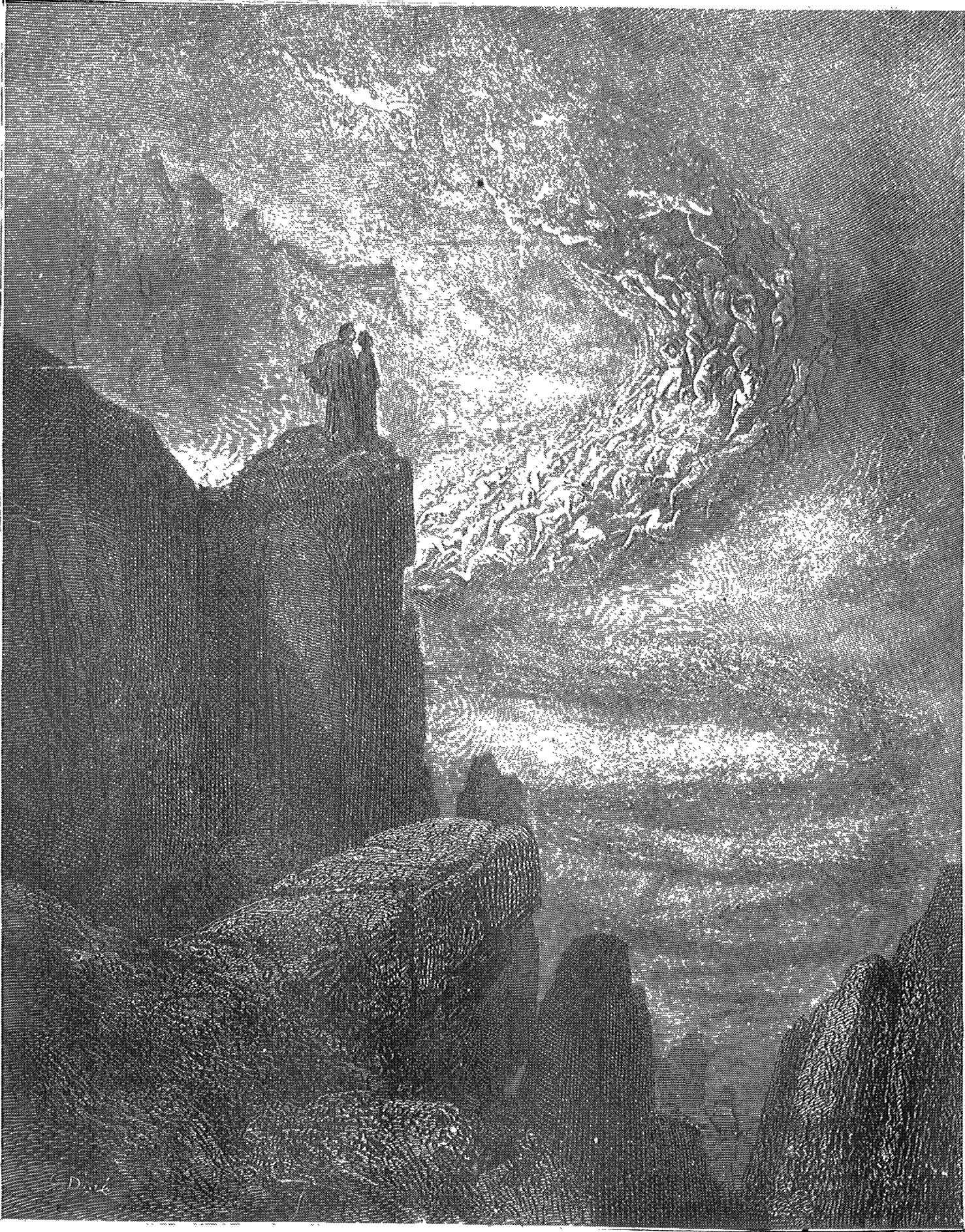
Then when a little more I raised my brow,
 I spied the master of the sapient throng,
 Seated amid the philosophic train.
 Him all admire, all pay him reverence due.
 There Socrates and Plato both I mark'd
 Nearest to him in rank, Democritus,
 Who sets the world at chance, Diogenes,

With Heraclitus, and Empedocles,
And Anaxagoras, and Thales sage,
Zeno, and Dioscorides well read
In Nature's secret lore. Orpheus I mark'd
And Linus, Tully and moral Seneca,
Euclid and Ptolemy, Hippocrates,
Galenus, Avicen, and him who made
That commentary vast, Averroes.

Of all to speak at full were vain attempt;
For my wide theme so urges, that ofttimes
My words fall short of what bechanced. In two
The six associates part. Another way
My sage guide leads me, from that air serene,
Into a climate ever vexed with storms:
And to a part I come, where no light shines.



There Minos stands.
Canto V., line 4.



The stormy blast of hell
With restless fury drives the spirits on.

Canto V., lines 32, 33.

CANTO. V.

ARGUMENT.

Coming into the second circle of Hell, Dante at the entrance beholds Minos the infernal Judge, by whom he is admonished to beware how he enters those regions. Here he witnesses the punishment of carnal sinners, who are tost about ceaselessly in the dark air by the most furious winds. Amongst these, he meets with Francesca of Rimini, through pity at whose sad tale he falls fainting to the ground.

FROM the first circle I descended thus
Down to the second, which, a lesser space
Embracing, so much more of grief contains,
Provoking bitter moans. There Minos stands,
Grinning with ghastly feature; he, of all
Who enter, strict examining the crimes,
Gives sentence, and dismisses them beneath,
According as he foldeth him around:
For when before him comes the ill-fated soul,
It all confesses; and that judge severe
Of sins, considering what place in hell
Suits the transgression, with his tail so oft
Himself encircles, as degrees beneath
He dooms it to descend. Before him stand
Always a numerous throng; and in his turn
Each one to judgment passing, speaks, and hears
His fate, thence downward to his dwelling hurl'd.

“O thou! who to this residence of woe
Approachest!” when he saw me coming, cried
Minos, relinquishing his dread employ,
“Look how thou enter here; beware in whom
Thou place thy trust; let not the entrance broad
Deceive thee to thy harm.” To him my guide.
“Wherefore exclaimest? Hinder not his way

By destiny appointed; so 'tis will'd,
Where will and power are one. Ask thou no more."

Now 'gin the rueful wailings to be heard.
Now am I come where many a plaining voice
Smites on mine ear. Into a place I came
Where light was silent all. Bellowing there groan'd
A noise, as of a sea in tempest torn
By warring winds. The stormy blast of hell
With restless fury drives the spirits on,
Whirl'd round and dashed amain with sore annoy.
When they arrive before the ruinous sweep,
There shrieks are heard, there lamentations, moans,
And blasphemies 'gainst the good Power in heaven.

I understood, that to this torment sad
The carnal sinners are condemn'd, in whom
Reason by lust is sway'd. As in large troops
And multitudinous, when winter reigns,
The starlings on their wings are borne abroad;
So bear the tyrannous gust those evil souls.
On this side and on that, above, below,
It drives them: hope of rest to solace them
Is none nor e'en of milder pang. As cranes,
Chanting their dolorous notes, traverse the sky,
Stretch'd out in long array; so I beheld
Spirits, who came loud wailing, hurried on
By their dire doom. Then I: "Instructor! who
Are these, by the black air so scourged?" — "The first
'Mong those, of whom thou question'st," he replied,
"O'er many tongues was empress. She in vice
Of luxury was so shameless, that she made
Liking be lawful by promulged decree,
To clear the blame she had herself incurr'd.
This is Semiramis, of whom 'tis writ,
That she succeeded Ninus her espoused;
And held the land, which now the Soldan rules.
The next in amorous fury slew herself,



Bard! willingly
I would address those two together coming,
Which seem so light before the wind.

Canto V., lines 72-74.



Love brought us to one death : Caina waits
The soul, who spilt our life.

Canto V., lines 105, 106.

And to Sicheus' ashes broke her faith:
Then follows Cleopatra lustful queen."

There mark'd I Helen, for whose sake so long
The time was fraught with evil; there the great
Achilles, who with love fought to the end.
Paris I saw, and Tristan; and beside,
A thousand more he show'd me, and by name
Pointed them out, whom love bereaved of life.

When I had heard my sage instructor name
Those dames and knights of antique days, o'erpower'd
By pity, well nigh in a maze my mind
Was lost; and I began: "Bard! willingly
I would address those two together coming,
Which seem so light before the wind." He thus:
"Note thou, when nearer they to us approach.
Then by that love which carries them along,
Entreat; and they will come." Soon as the wind
Sway'd them toward us, I thus framed my speech:
"Oh, wearied spirits! come, and hold discourse
With us, if by none else restrain'd." As doves
By fond desire invited, on wide wings
And firm, to their sweet nest returning home,
Cleave the air, wafted by their will along;
Thus issued, from that troop where Dido ranks,
They, through the ill air speeding: with such force
My cry prevail'd, by strong affection urged.

"Oh, gracious creature and benign! who go'st
Visiting, through this element obscure,
Us, who the world with bloody stain imbrued;
If, for a friend, the King of all, we own'd,
Our prayer to Him should for thy peace arise,
Since thou hast pity on our evil plight.
Of whatso'er to hear or to discourse
It pleases thee, that will we hear, of that
Freely with the discourse, while e'er the wind,
As now, is mute. The land, that gave me birth,

Is situate on the coast, where Po descends
 To rest in ocean with his sequent streams.
 "Love, that in gentle heart is quickly learnt,
 Entangled him by that fair form, from me
 Ta'en in such cruel sort, as grieves me still:
 Love, that denial takes from none beloved,
 Caught me with pleasing him so passing well,
 That, as thou seest, he yet deserts me not.
 Love brought us to one death: Caina waits
 The soul, who spilt our life." Such were their words;
 At hearing which, downward I bent my looks,
 And held them there so long that the bard cried:
 "What art thou pondering?" I in answer thus:
 "Alas! by what sweet thoughts, what fond desire
 Must they at length to that ill pass have reach'd!"

Then turning, I to them my speech address'd,
 And thus began: "Francesca! your sad fate
 Even to tears my grief and pity moves.
 But tell me; in the time of your sweet sighs,
 By what, and how Love granted, that ye know
 Your yet uncertain wishes?" She replied:
 "No greater grief than to remember days
 Of joy, when misery is at hand. That kens
 Thy learn'd instructor. Yet so eagerly
 If thou art bent to know the primal root,
 From whence our love gat being, I will do
 As one, who weeps and tells his tale. One day,
 For our delight we read of Lancelot,
 How him love thrall'd. Alone we were, and no
 Suspicion near us. Oft-times by that reading
 Our eyes were drawn together, and the hue
 Fled from our alter'd cheek. But at one point
 Alone we fell. When of that smile we read,
 The wished smile so rapturously kiss'd
 By one so deep in love, then he, who ne'er
 From me shall separaté, at once my lips

All trembling kiss'd. The book and writer both
Were love's purveyors. In its leaves that day
We read no more." While thus one spirit spake,
The other wail'd so sorely, that heart-struck
I, through compassion fainting, seem'd not far
From death, and like a corse fell to the ground.

CANTO VI.

ARGUMENT.

On his recovery, the poet finds himself in the third circle, where the gluttonous are punished. Their torment is, to lie in the mire, under a continual and heavy storm of hail, snow, and discolored water; Cerberus meanwhile barking over them with his threefold throat, and rending them piecemeal. One of these, who on earth was named Ciaccio, foretells the divisions with which Florence is about to be distracted. Dante proposes a question to his guide, who solves it; and they proceed toward the fourth circle.

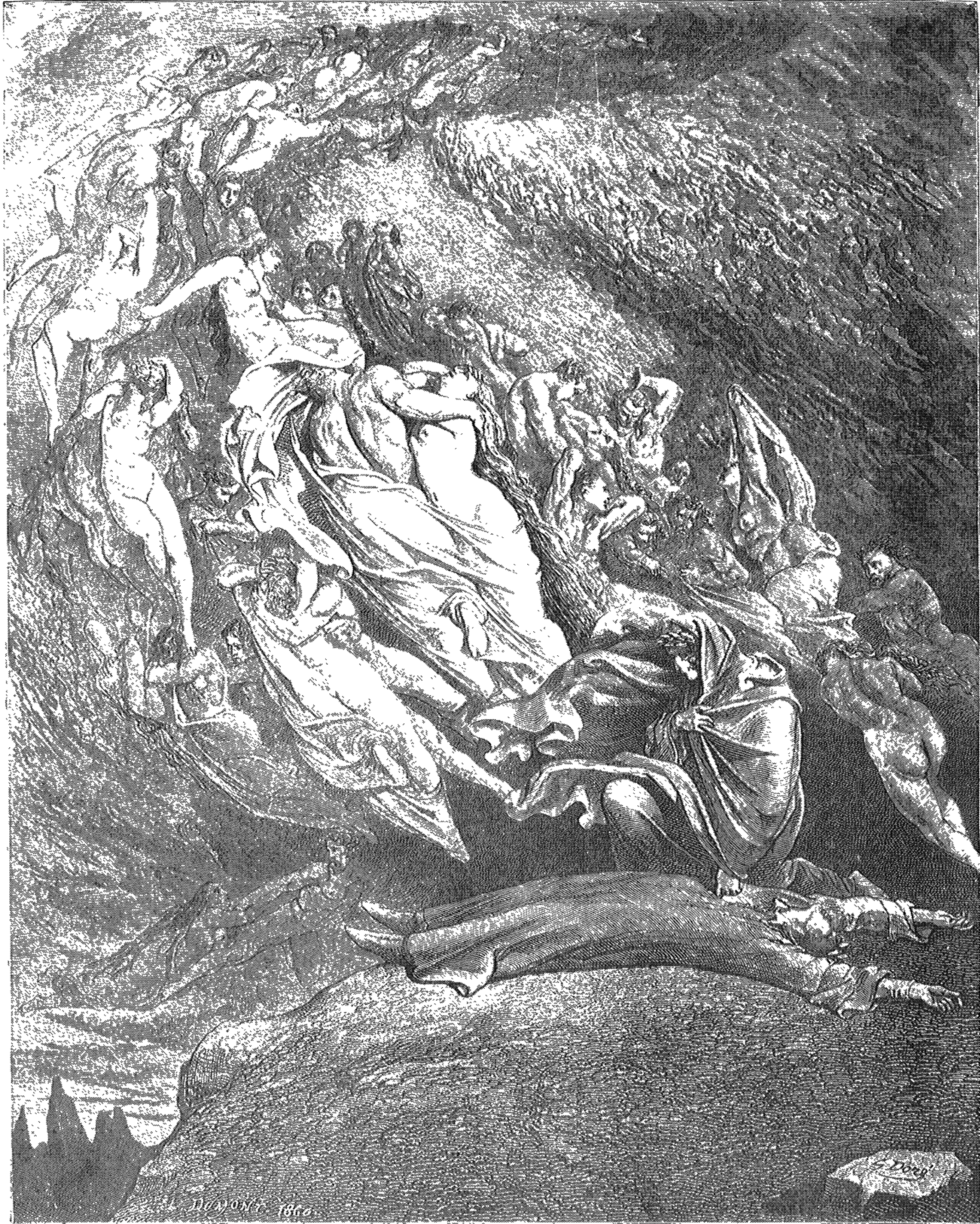
MY sense reviving, that erewhile had droop'd
With pity for the kindred shades, whence grief
O'ercame me wholly, straight around I see
New torments, new tormented souls, which way
So'er I move, or turn, or bend my sight.
In the third circle I arrive, of showers
Ceaseless, accursed, heavy and cold, unchanged
For ever, both in kind and in degree.
Large hail, discolor'd water, sleety flaw
Through the dun midnight air streamed down amain:
Stank all the land whereon that tempest fell.

Cerberus, cruel monster, fierce and strange,
Through his wide threefold throat, barks as a dog
Over the multitude immersed beneath.
His eyes glare crimson, black his unctuous beard,
His belly large, and claw'd the hands, with which
He tears the spirits, flays them, and their limbs
Piecemeal disparts. Howling there spread, as curs,
Under the rainy deluge, with one side
The other screening, oft they roll them round,
A wretched, godless crew. When that great worm
Descried us, savage Cerberus, he oped
His jaws, and the fangs show'd us; not a limb
Of him but trembled. Then my guide, his palms



In its leaves that day
We read no more.

Canto V., lines 134, 135.



I, through compassion fainting, seem'd not far
From death, and like a corse fell to the ground.

Canto V., lines 137, 138.

Expanding on the ground, thence fill'd with earth
 Raised them, and cast it in his ravenous maw.
 E'en as a dog, that yelling bays for food
 His keeper, when the morsel comes, lets fall
 His fury, bent alone with eager haste
 To swallow it; so dropp'd the loathsome cheeks
 Of demon Cerberus, who thundering stuns
 The spirits, that they for deafness wish in vain.

We, o'er the shade thrown prostrate by the brunt
 Of the heavy tempest passing, set our feet
 Upon their emptiness, that substance seem'd.

They all along the earth extended lay,
 Save one, that sudden raised himself to sit,
 Soon as that way he saw us pass. "Oh, thou!"
 He cried, "who through the infernal shades art led,
 Own, if again thou know'st me. Thou wast framed
 Or ere my frame was broken." I replied:
 "The anguish thou endurest perchance so takes
 Thy form from my remembrance, that it seems
 As if I saw thee never. But inform
 Me who thou art, that in a place so sad
 Art set, and in such torment, that although
 Other be greater, none disgusteth more."
 He thus in answer to my words rejoind:
 "Thy city, heap'd with envy to the brim,
 Aye, that the measure overflows its bounds,
 Held me in brighter days. Ye citizens
 Were wont to name me Ciacco. For the sin
 Of gluttony, damned vice, beneath this rain,
 E'en as thou seest, I with fatigue am worn:
 Nor I sole spirit in this woe: all these
 Have by like crime incurr'd like punishment."

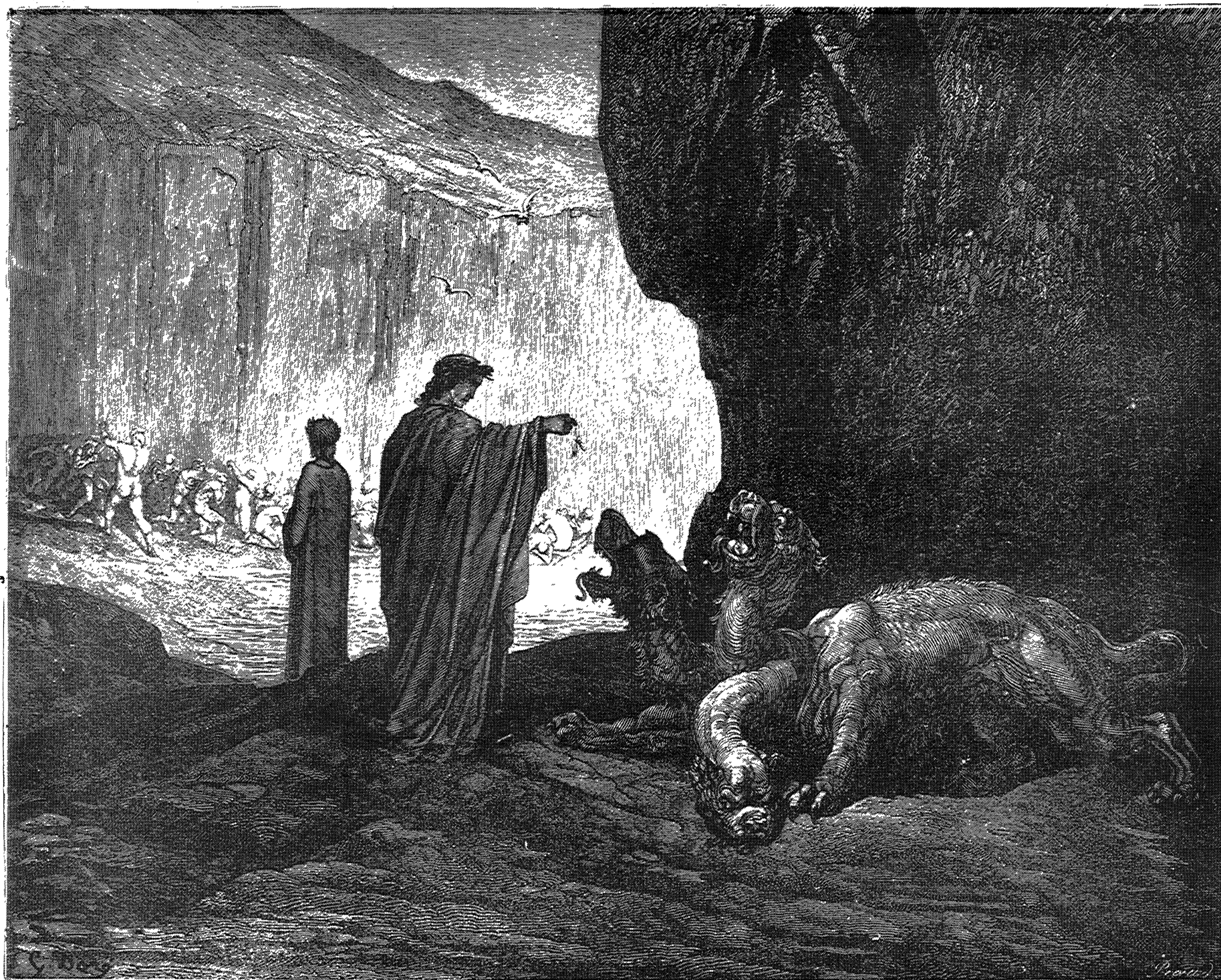
No more he said, and I my speech resumed:
 "Ciacco! thy dire affliction grieves me much,
 Even to tears. But tell me if thou know'st,
 What shall at length befall the citizens

Of the divided city; whether any
 Just one inhabit there: and tell the cause
 Whence jarring Discord hath assail'd it thus."

He then: "After long striving they will come
 To blood; and the wild party from the woods
 Will chase the other with much injury forth.
 Then it behoves that this must fall, within
 Three solar circles; and the other rise
 By borrow'd force of one, who under shore
 Now rests. It shall a long space hold aloof
 Its forehead, keeping under heavy weight
 The other opprest, indignant at the load,
 And grieving sore. The just are two in number,
 But they neglected. Avarice, envy, pride,
 Three fatal sparks, have set the hearts of all
 On fire." Here ceased the lamentable sound;
 And I continued thus: "Still would I learn
 More from thee, further parley still entreat.
 Of Farinata and Tegghiaio say,
 They who so well deserved; of Giacopo,
 Arrigo, Mosca, and the rest, who bent
 Their minds on working good. Oh! tell me where
 They bide, and to their knowledge let me come.
 For I am prest with keen desire to hear
 If heaven's sweet cup, or poisonous drug of hell,
 Be to their lips assign'd." He answer'd straight:
 "These are yet blacker spirits. Various crimes
 Have sunk them deeper in the dark abyss.
 If thou so far descendest, thou may'st see them.
 But to the pleasant world, when thou return'st,
 Of me make mention, I entreat thee, there.
 No more I tell thee, answer thee no more."

This said, his fixed eyes he turn'd askance,
 A little eyed me, then bent down his head,
 And 'midst his blind companions with it fell.

When thus my guide: "No more his bed he leaves,



Then my guide, his palms
Expanding on the ground, thence filled with earth
Raised them, and cast it in his ravenous maw.

Canto VI., lines 24-26.



Thy city, heap'd with envy to the brim,
Aye, that the measure overflows its bounds,

Canto VI., lines 49, 50.

Ere the last angel-trumpet blow. The Power
Adverse to these shall then in glory come,
Each one forthwith to his sad tomb repair,
Resume his fleshly vesture and his form,
And hear the eternal doom re-echoing rend
The vault." So pass'd we through that mixture foul
Of spirits and rain, with tardy steps; meanwhile
Touching, though slightly, on the life to come.
For thus I question'd: "Shall these tortures, sir,
When the great sentence passes, be increased,
Or mitigated, or as now severe?"

He then: "Consult thy knowledge; that decides,
That, as each thing to more perfection grows,
It feels more sensibly both good and pain.
Though ne'er to true perfection may arrive
This race accurst, yet nearer then, than now,
They shall approach it." Compassing that path,
Circuitous we journey'd; and discourse,
Much more than I relate, between us pass'd:
Till at the point, whence the steps led below,
Arrived, there Plutus, the great foe, we found.

CANTO VII.

ARGUMENT.

In the present canto Dante describes his descent into the fourth circle, at the beginning of which he sees Plutus stationed. Here one like doom awaits the prodigal and the avaricious ; which is, to meet in direful conflict, rolling great weights against each other with mutual upbraidings. From hence Virgil takes occasion to show how vain the goods which are committed into the charge of Fortune , and this moves our author to inquire what being that Fortune is, of whom he speaks : which question being resolved, they go down into the fifth circle, where they find the wrathful and gloomy tormented in the Stygian lake. Having made a compass round great part of this lake, they come at last to the base of a lofty tower.

“A H me! O Satan! Satan!” loud exclaim’d
Plutus, in accent hoarse of wild alarm :
And the kind sage, whom no event surprised,
To comfort me thus spake: “Let not thy fear
Harm thee, for power in him, be sure is none
To hinder down this rock thy swift descent.”
Then to that swollen lip turning, “Peace!” he cried,
“Curst wolf! thy fury inward on thyself
Prey, and consume thee! Through the dark profound,
Not without cause, he passes. So ’tis will’d
On high, there where the great Archangel pour’d
Heaven’s vengeance on the first adulterer proud.”

As sails, full spread and bellying with the wind,
Drop suddenly collapsed, if the mast split;
So to the ground down dropped the cruel fiend.

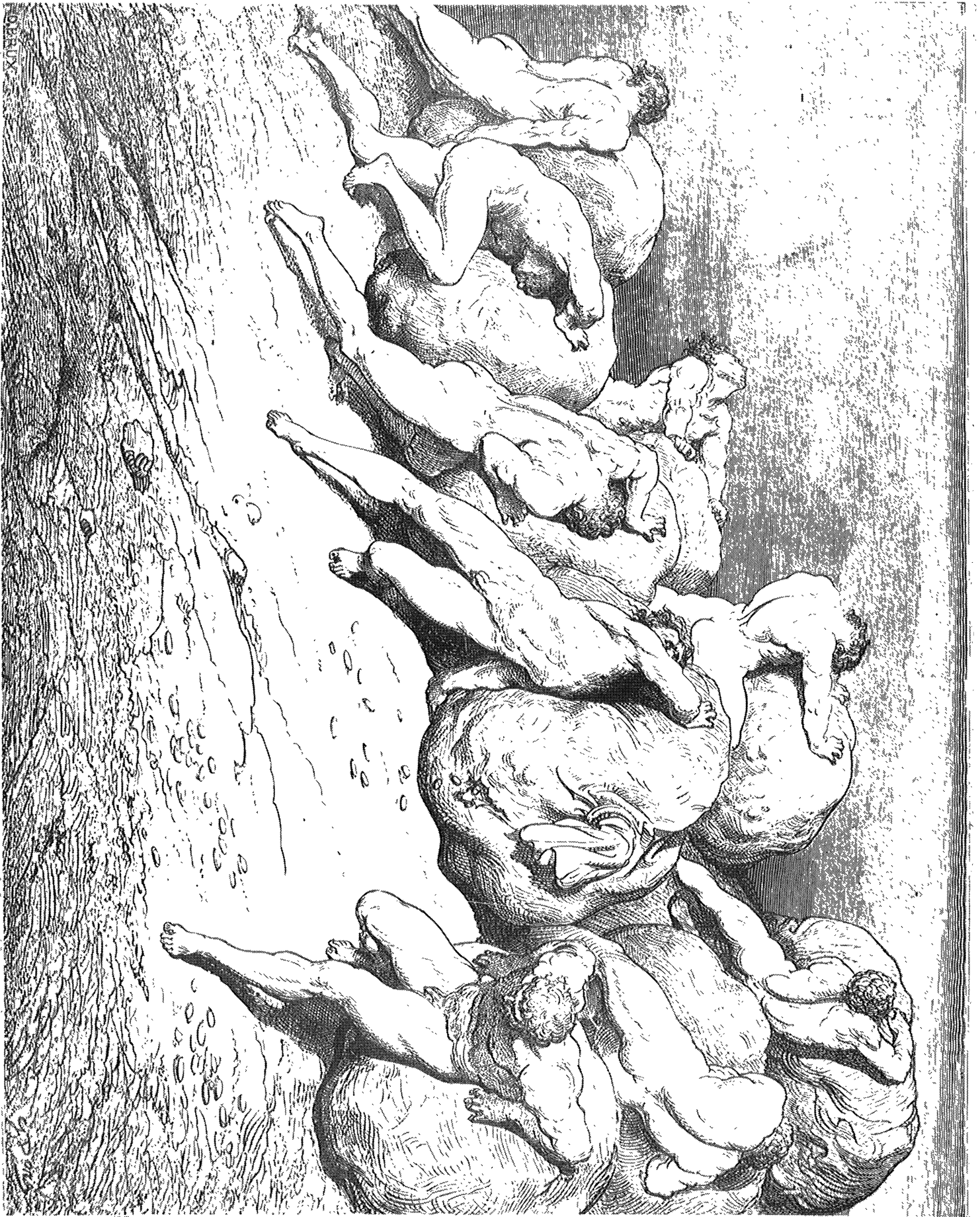
Thus we, descending to the fourth steep ledge,
Gain’d on the dismal shore, that all the woe
Hems in of all the universe. Ah me!
Almighty Justice! in what store thou heap’st
New pains, new troubles, as I here beheld.
Wherefore doth fault of ours bring us to this?

E’en as a billow, on Charybdis rising,
Against encounter’d billow dashing breaks;
Such is the dance this wretched race must lead,



Curst wolf! thy fury inward or thyself
Prey, and consume thee.

Canto VII., lines 8, 9.



Not all the gold that is beneath the moon,
Or ever hath been, or these toil-worn souls,
Might purchase rest for one.

Canto VII., lines 65-67.

Whom more than elsewhere numerous here I found
 From one side and the other, with loud voice,
 Both roll'd on weights, by main force of their breasts,
 Then smote together, and each one forthwith
 Roll'd them back voluble, turning again;
 Exclaiming these, "Why holdest thou so fast?"
 Those answering, "And why casteth thou away?"
 So, still repeating their despiteful song,
 They to the opposite point, on either hand,
 Traversed the horrid circle; then arrived,
 Both turn'd them round, and through the middle space
 Conflicting met again. At sight whereof
 I, stung with grief, thus spake: "Oh, say, my guide!
 What race is this. Were these, whose heads are shorn,
 On our left hand, all separate to the Church?"

He straight replied: "In their first life, these all
 In mind were so distorted, that they made,
 According to due measure, of their wealth
 No use. This clearly from their words collect,
 Which they howl forth, at each extremity
 Arriving of the circle, where their crime
 Contrary in kind disparts them. To the Church
 Were separate those, that with no hairy cowls
 Are crown'd, both popes and cardinals, o'er whom
 Avarice dominion absolute maintains."

I then; "Mid such as these some needs must be,
 Whom I shall recognize, that with the blot
 Of these foul sins were stain'd." He answering thus:
 "Vain thought conceivest thou. That ignoble life,
 Which made them vile before, now makes them dark,
 And to all knowledge indiscernible.
 For ever they shall meet in this rude shock:
 These from the tomb with clenched grasp shall rise,
 Those with close-shaven locks. That ill they gave,
 And ill they kept, hath of the beauteous world
 Deprived, and set them at this strife, which needs
 No labor'd phrase of mine to set it off.

Now may'st thou see, my son, how brief, how vain,
 The goods committed into Fortune's hands,
 For which the human race keep such a coil!
 Not all the gold that is beneath the moon,
 Or ever hath been, of these toil-worn souls
 Might purchase rest for one." I thus rejoin'd:
 "My guide! of thee this also would I learn;
 This Fortune, that thou speak'st of, what it is,
 Whose talons grasp the blessings of the world."

He thus: "Oh, beings blind! what ignorance
 Besets you! Now my judgment hear and mark.
 He, whose transcendent wisdom passes all,
 The heavens creating, gave them ruling powers
 To guide them; so that each part shines to each,
 Their light in equal distribution pour'd.
 By similar appointment He ordain'd,
 Over the world's bright images to rule,
 Superintendence of a guiding hand
 And general minister, which, at due time,
 May change the empty vantages of life,
 From race to race, from one to other's blood.
 Beyond prevention of man's wisest care:
 Wherefore one nation rises into sway,
 Another languishes, e'en as her will
 Decrees, from us conceal'd, as in the grass,
 The serpent train. Against her nought avails
 Your utmost wisdom. She with foresight plans,
 Judges, and carries on her reign, as theirs
 The other powers divine. Her changes know
 None intermission, by necessity
 She is made swift, so frequent come who claim
 Succession in her favors. This is she
 So execrated e'en by those whose debt
 To her is rather praise: they wrongfully
 With blame requite her, and with evil word;
 But she is blessed, and for that reck's not:
 Amidst the other primal beings glad,

Rolls on her sphere, and in her bliss exults.
 Now on our way pass we, to heavier woe
 Descending: for each star is falling now,
 That mounted at our entrance, and forbids
 Too long our tarrying." We the circle cross'd
 To the next steep, arriving at a well,
 That boiling pours itself into a fosse
 Sluiced from its source. Far murkier was the wave
 Than sablest grain: and we in company
 Of the inky waters, journeying by their side,
 Enter'd, through by a different track, beneath.
 Into a lake, the Stygian named, expands
 The dismal stream, when it has reach'd the foot
 Of the grey wither'd cliffs. Intent I stood
 To gaze, and in the marish sunk descried
 A miry tribe, all naked, and with looks
 Betokening rage. They with their hands alone
 Struck not, but with the head, the breast, the feet
 Cutting each other piecemeal with their fangs.

The good instructor spake: "Now seest thou, son,
 The souls of those whom anger overcame.
 This too for certain know, that underneath
 The water dwells a multitude, whose sighs
 Into these bubbles make the surface heave,
 As thine eye tells thee wheresoe'er it turn.
 Fix'd in the slime, they say, 'Sad once were we,
 In the sweet air made gladsome by the sun.
 Carrying a foul and lazy mist within:
 Now in these murky settlings are we sad.'
 Such dolorous strain they gurgle in their throats,
 But word distinct can utter none." Our route
 Thus compass'd we, a segment widely stretch'd
 Between the dry embankment, and the core
 Of the loath'd pool, turning meanwhile our eyes
 Downward on those who gulp'd its muddy lees;
 Nor stopp'd, till to a tower's low base we came.

CANTO VIII.

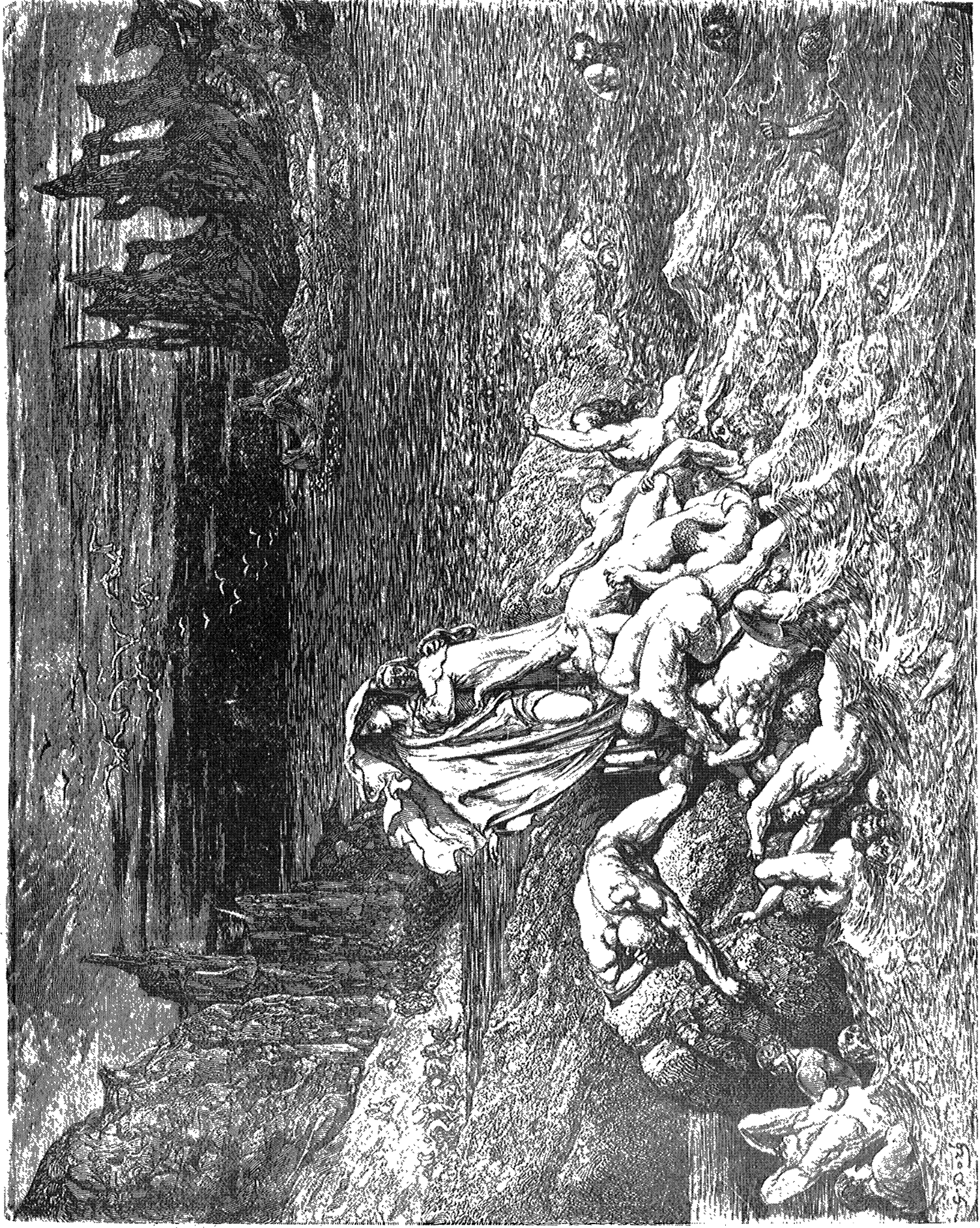
ARGUMENT.

A signal having been made from the tower, Phlegyas, the ferryman of the lake, speedily crosses it, and conveys Virgil and Dante to the other side. On their passage they met with Filippo Argenti, whose fury and torment are described. They then arrive at the city of Dis, the entrance whereto is denied, and the portals closed against them by many demons.

MY theme pursuing I relate, that ere
We reach'd the lofty turret's base, our eyes
Its height ascended, where we mark'd uphung
Two cressets, and another saw from far
Return the signal, so remote, that scarce
The eye could catch its beam. I, turning round,
To the deep source of knowledge, thus inquired:
"Say what this means; and what, that other light
In answer set: what agency doth this?"

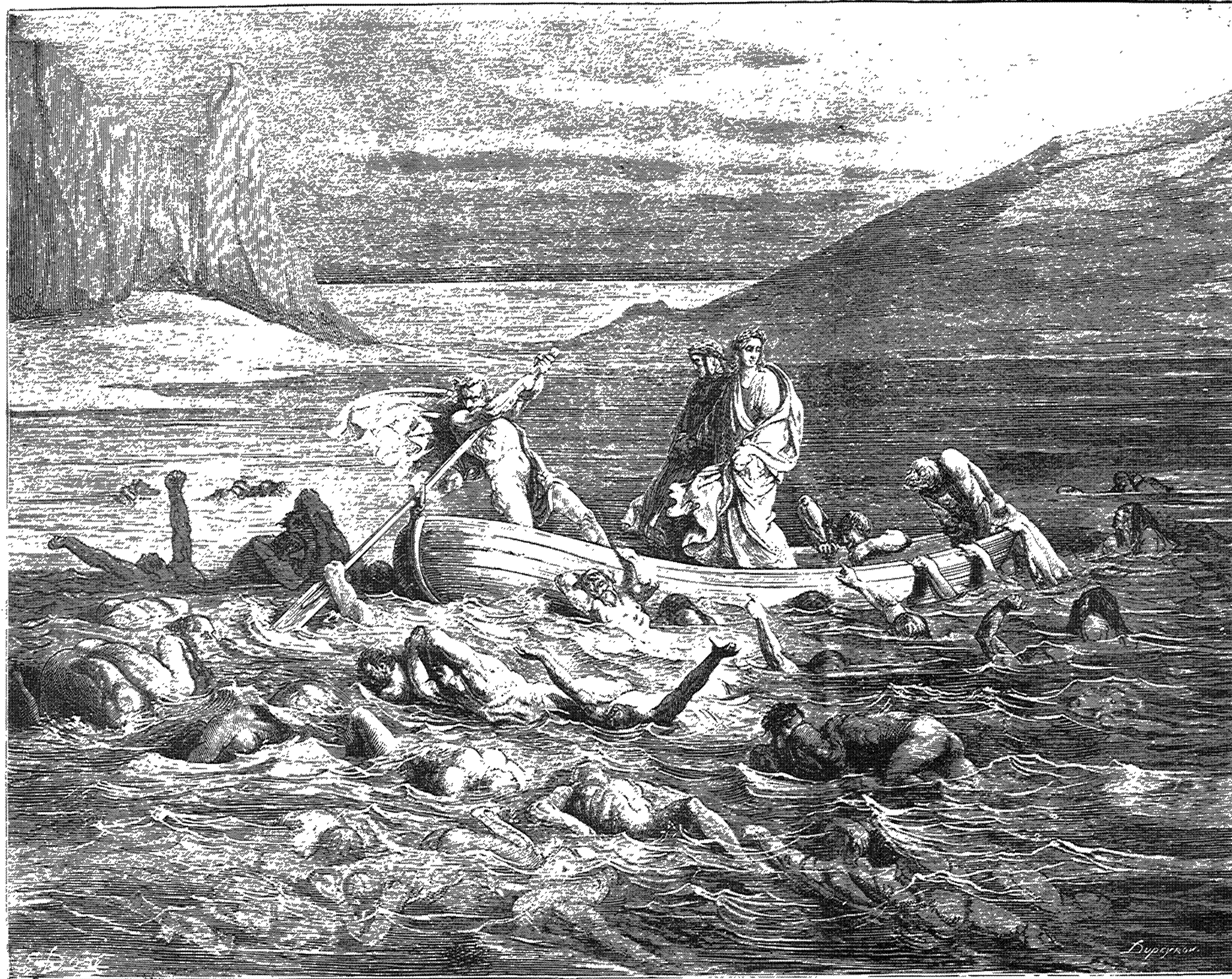
"There on the filthy waters," he replied,
"E'en now what next awaits us mayst thou see,
If the marsh-gendered fog conceal it not."

Never was arrow from the cord dismiss'd
That ran its way so nimbly through the air,
As a small barque, that through the waves I spied
Toward us coming, under the sole sway
Of one that ferried it, who cried aloud,
"Art thou arrived, fell spirit?" — "Phlegyas, Phlegyas,
This time thou criest in vain," my lord replied;
"No longer shalt thou have us, but while o'er
The slimy pool we pass." As one who hears
Of some great wrong he hath sustain'd, whereat
Inly he pines, so Phlegyas inly pined
In his fierce ire. My guide, descending, stepp'd



Now seest thou, son!
The souls of those, whom anger overcame.

Canto VII, lines 118, 119.



Soon as both embark'd,
Cutting the waves, goes on the ancient prow,
More deeply than with others it is wont.

Canto VIII., lines 27-29.

Into the skiff, and bade me enter next,
 Close at his side; nor, till my entrance, seem'd
 The vessel freighted. Soon as both embark'd,
 Cutting the waves, goes on the ancient prow,
 More deeply than with others is its wont.

While we our course o'er the dead channel held,
 One drench'd in mire before me came, and said,
 "Who art thou, that thus comest ere thine hour?"

I answer'd, "Though I come, I tarry not:
 But who art thou, that art become so foul?"

"One, as thou seest, who mourn," he straight replied.

To which I thus: "In mourning and in woe,
 Curst spirit! tarry thou. I know thee well,
 E'en thus in filth disguised." Then stretch'd he forth
 Hands to the barque; whereof my teacher sage
 Aware, thrusting him back: "Away! down there
 To the other dogs!" then, with his arms my neck
 Encircling, kiss'd my cheek, and spake: "O soul,
 Justly disdainful! blest was she in whom
 Thou wast conceived. He in the world was one
 For arrogance noted: to his memory
 No virtue lends its luster; even so
 Here is his shadow furious. There above,
 How many now hold themselves mighty kings,
 Who here like swine shall wallow in the mire,
 Leaving behind them horrible dispraise."

I then: "Master! him fain would I behold
 Whelm'd in these dregs, before we quit the lake."

He thus: "Or ever to thy view the shore
 Be offer'd, satisfied shall be that wish,
 Which well deserves completion." Scarce his words
 Were ended, when I saw the miry tribes
 Set on him with such violence, that yet
 For that I render thanks to God, and praise.
 "To Filippo Argenti!" cried they all:
 And on himself the moody Florentine

Turn'd his avenging fangs. Him here we left,
 Nor speak I of him more. But on mine ear
 Sudden a sound of lamentation smote,
 Whereat mine eye unbarr'd I sent abroad.

And thus the good instructor: "Now, my son,
 Draws near the city, that of Dis is named,
 With its grave denizens, a mighty throng."

I thus: "The minarets already, sir!
 There, certes, in the valley I descry,
 Gleaming vermilion, as if they from fire
 Had issued." He replied: "Eternal fire,
 That inward burns, shows them with ruddy flame
 Illumed; as in this nether hell thou seest."

We came within the fosses deep, that moat
 This region comfortless. The walls appear'd
 As they were framed in iron. We had made
 Wide circuit, ere a place we reach'd where loud
 The mariner cried vehement, "Go forth:
 The entrance is here." Upon the gates I spied
 More than a thousand, who of old from Heaven
 Were shower'd. With ireful gestures, "Who is this,"
 They cried, "that, without death first felt, goes through
 The regions of the dead?" My sapient guide
 Made sign that he for secret parley wish'd;
 Whereat their angry scorn abating, thus
 They spake: "Come thou alone; and let him go,
 Who has so hardily entered this realm.
 Alone return he by his witless way;
 If well he know it, let him prove. For thee
 Here shalt thou tarry, who through clime so dark
 Hast been his escort." Now bethink thee, reader!
 What cheer was mine at sound of those curst words.
 I did believe I never should return.

"Oh, my loved guide! who more than seven times
 Security hast render'd me, and drawn
 From peril deep, whereto I stood exposed,



My teacher sage
Aware, thrusting him back: "Away! down there
To the other dogs!"

Canto VIII., lines 39-41.



I could not hear what terms he offer'd them,
But they conferr'd not long.

Canto VIII., lines 110, 111.

Desert me not," I cried, "in this extreme,
And, if our onward going be denied,
Together trace we back our steps with speed."

My liege, who thither had conducted me,
Replied: "Fear not: for of our passage none
Hath power to disappoint us, by such high
Authority permitted. But do thou
Expect me here; meanwhile thy weary spirit
Comfort, and feed with kindly hope, assured
I will not leave thee in this lower world."

This said, departs the sire benevolent,
And quits me. Hesitating I remain
At war, 'twixt will and will not, in my thoughts.

I could not hear what terms he offered them,
But they conferr'd not long, for all at once
Pellmell rush'd back within. Closed were the gates,
By those our adversaries, on the breast
Of my liege lord: excluded, he return'd
To me with tardy steps. Upon the ground
His eyes were bent, and from his brow erased
All confidence, while thus in sighs he spake:
"Who hath denied me these abodes of woe?"
Then thus to me: "That I am anger'd, think
No ground of terror: in this trial I
Shall vanquish, use what arts they may within
For hindrance. This their insolence, not new,
Erewhile at gate less secret they display'd,
Which still is without bolt; upon its arch
Thou saw'st the deadly scroll: and even now,
On this side of its entrance, down the steep,
Passing the circles, unescorted, comes
One whose strong might can open us this land."

CANTO IX.

ARGUMENT.

After some hindrances, and having seen the hellish furies and other monsters, the poet, by the help of an angel, enters the city of Dis, wherein he discovers that the heretics are punished in tombs burning with intense fire: and he, together with Virgil, passes onward between the sepulchers and the walls of the city.

THE hue, which coward dread on my pale cheeks
Imprinted when I saw my guide turn back,
Chased that from his which newly they had worn,
And inwardly restrain'd it. He, as one
Who listens, stood attentive: for his eye
Not far could lead him through the sable air,
And the thick-gathering cloud. "It yet behoves
We win this fight"; thus he began: "if not,
Such aid to us is offer'd.—Oh! how long
Me seems it, ere the promised help arrive."

I noted, how the sequel of his words
Cloked their beginning; for the last he spake
Agreed not with the first. But not the less
My fear was at his saying; sith I drew
To import worse, perchance, than that he held,
His mutilated speech. "Doth ever any
Into this rueful concave's extreme depth
Descend, out of the first degree, whose pain
Is deprivation merely of sweet hope?"

Thus I inquiring. "Rarely," he replied,
"It chances, that among us any makes
This journey, which I wend. Erewhile, 'tis true,
Once came I here beneath, conjured by fell
Erictho, sorceress, who compell'd the shades
Back to their bodies. No long space my flesh



Mark thou each dire Erynnis.

Canto IX., line 46.



To the gate
He came, and with his wand touch'd it, whereat
Open without impediment it flew.

Was naked of me, when within these walls
 She made me enter, to draw forth a spirit
 From out of Judas' circle. Lowest place
 Is that of all, obscurest, and removed
 Furthest from Heaven's all-circling orb. The road
 Full well I know: thou therefore rest secure.
 That lake, the noisome stench exhaling, round
 The city of grief encompasses, which now
 We may not enter without rage." Yet more
 He added: but I hold it not in mind,
 For that mine eye toward the lofty tower
 Had drawn me wholly, to its burning top;
 Where, in an instant, I beheld uprisen
 At once three hellish furies, stain'd with blood:
 In limb and motion feminine they seemed;
 Around them greenest hydras twisting roll'd
 Their volumes; adders and cerastes crept
 Instead of hair, and their fierce temples bound.

He, knowing well the miserable hags
 Who tend the queen of endless woe, thus spake:
 "Mark thou each dire Erynnis. To the left,
 This is Megæra; on the right hand, she
 Who wails, Alecto; and Tisiphone
 I' th' midst." This said, in silence he remain'd.
 Their breast they each one clawing tore; themselves
 Smote with their palms, and such thrill clamor raised
 That to the bard I clung, suspicion-bound.
 "Hasten Medusa: so to adamant
 Him shall we change"; all looking down exclaim'd:
 "E'en when by Theseus' might assail'd, we took
 No ill revenge." Turn thyself round, and keep
 Thy countenance hid; for if the Gorgon dire
 Be shown, and thou shouldst view it, thy return
 Upwards would be forever lost. This said,
 Himself, my gentle master, turn'd me round;
 Nor trusted he my hands, but with his own

He also hid me. Ye of intellect
 Sound and entire, mark well the lore conceal'd
 Under close texture of the mystic strain.

And now there came o'er the perturbed waves
 Loud-crashing, terrible, a sound that made
 Either shore tremble, as if of a wind
 Impetuous, from conflicting vapors sprung,
 That 'gainst some forest driving all his might,
 Plucks off the branches, beats them down, and hurls
 Afar; then, onward passing, proudly sweeps
 His whirlwind rage, while beasts and shepherds fly.

Mine eyes he loosed, and spake: "And now direct
 Thy visual nerve along that ancient foam,
 There, thickest where the smoke ascends." As frogs
 Before their foe the serpent, through the wave
 Ply swiftly all, till at the ground each one
 Lies on a heap; more than a thousand spirits
 Destroy'd, so saw I fleeing before one
 Who pass'd with unwet feet the Stygian sound.
 He, from his face removing the gross air,
 Oft his left hand forth stretch'd, and seem'd alone
 By that annoyance wearied. I perceived
 That he was sent from Heaven; and to my guide
 Turn'd me, who signal made, that I should stand
 Quiet, and bend to him. Ah me! how full
 Of noble anger seem'd he. To the gate
 He came, and with his wand touch'd it, whereat
 Open without impediment it flew.

"Outcasts of heaven! Oh, abject race, and scorn'd!"
 Began he, on the horrid grunsel standing,
 "Whence doth this wild excess of insolence
 Lodge in you? wherefore kick you 'gainst that will
 Ne'er frustrate of its end, and which so oft
 Hath laid on you enforcement of your pangs?
 What profits, at the fates to butt the horn?
 Your Cerberus, if ye remember, hence

Bears still, peel'd of their hair, his throat and maw."

This said, he turn'd back o'er the filthy way,
 And syllable to us spake none; but wore
 The semblance of a man by other care
 Beset, and keenly prest, than thought of him
 Who in his presence stands. Then we our steps
 Toward that territory moved, secure
 After the hallow'd words. We, unopposed,
 There enter'd; and, my mind eager to learn
 What state a fortress like to that might hold,
 I, soon as enter'd, throw mine eye around,
 And see, on every part, wide-stretching space,
 Replete with bitter pain and torment ill.

As where Rhone stagnates on the plains of Arles,
 Or as at Pola, near Quarnaro's gulf,
 That closes Italy and laves her bounds,
 The place is all thick spread with sepulchers;
 So was it here, save what in horror here
 Excell'd: for 'midst the graves were scatter'd flames,
 Wherewith intensely all throughout they burn'd,
 That iron for no craft there hotter needs.

Their lids all hung suspended; and beneath,
 From them forth issued lamentable moans,
 Such as the sad and tortured well might raise.

I thus: "Master! say who are these, interr'd
 Within these vaults, of whom distinct we hear
 The dolorous sighs." He answer thus return'd:
 "The arch-heretics are here, accompanied
 By every sect their followers; and much more
 Than thou believest, the tombs are freighted: like
 With like is buried; and the monuments
 Are different in degrees of heat." This said,
 He to the right hand turning, on we pass'd
 Betwixt the afflicted and the ramparts high.

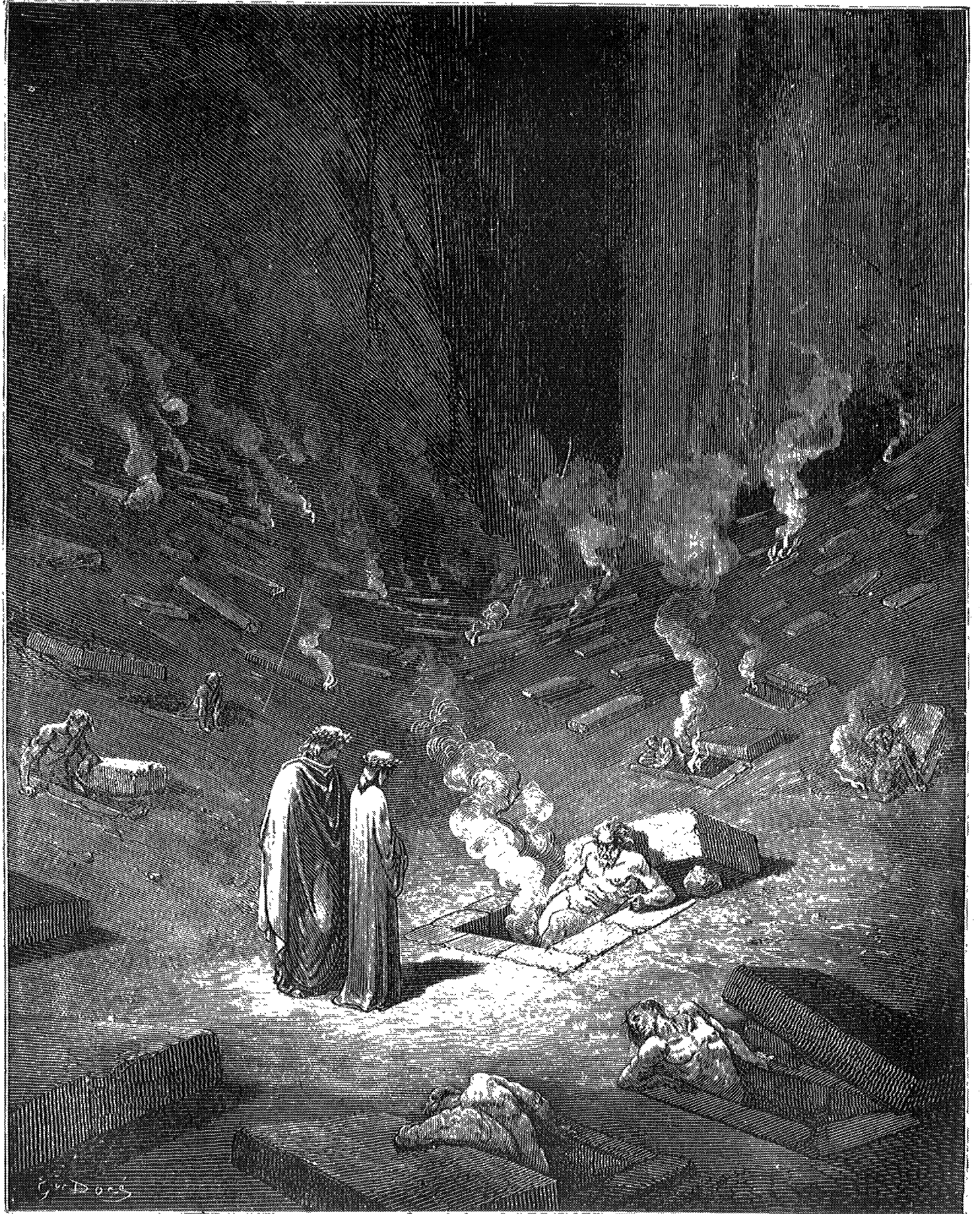
CANTO X.

ARGUMENT.

Dante, having obtained permission from his guide, holds discourse with Farinata degli Uberti and Cavalcante Cavalcanti, who lie in their fiery tombs that are yet open, and not to be close up till after the last judgment. Farinata predicts the poet's exile from Florence; and shows him that the condemned have knowledge of future things, but are ignorant of what is at present passing, unless it be revealed by some new comer from heaven.

NOW by a secret pathway we proceed,
Between the walls that hem the region round,
And the tormented souls: my master first,
I close behind his steps. "Virtue supreme!"
I thus began: "who through these ample orbs
In circuit lead'st me, even as thou will'st;
Speak thou, and satisfy my wish. May those
Who lie within these sepulchres, be seen?"
Already all the lids are raised, and none
O'er them keeps watch." He thus in answer spake:
"They shall be closed all, what time they here
From Josaphat return'd shall come, and bring
Their bodies, which above they now have left,
The cemetery on this part obtain,
With Epicurus, all his followers,
Who with the body make the spirit die.
Here therefore satisfaction shall be soon,
Both to the question asked, and to the wish
Which thou conceal'st in silence." I replied:
"I keep not, guide beloved! from thee my heart
Secreted, but to shun vain length of words;
A lesson erewhile taught me by thyself."

"O Tuscan! thou, who through the city of fire
Alive art passing, so discreet of speech:



He answer thus return d :
"The arch-heretics are here, accompanied
By every sect their followers."

Canto IX., lines 124-126.



He, soon as there I stood at the tomb's foot,
Eyed me a space ; then in a disdainful mood
Address'd me : " Say what ancestors were thine."

Canto X. lines 40-42

Here, please thee stay awhile. Thy utterance
 Declares the place of thy nativity
 To be that noble land, with which perchance
 I too severely dealt." Sudden that sound
 Forth issued from a vault, whereat, in fear,
 I somewhat closer to my leader's side
 Approaching, he thus spake: "What dost thou? Turn:
 Lo! Farinata there, who hath himself
 Uplifted: from his girdle upwards, all
 Exposed, behold him." On his face was mine
 Already fix'd: his breast and forehead there
 Erecting, seem'd as in high scorn he held
 E'en hell. Between the sepulchres, to him
 My guide thrust me, with fearless hands and prompt;
 This warning added: "See thy words be clear."

He, soon as I there stood at the tomb's foot,
 Eyed me a space; then in disdainful mood
 Address'd me: "Say what ancestors were thine."

I, willing to obey him, straight reveal'd
 The whole, nor kept back aught: whence he, his brow
 Somewhat uplifting, cried: "Fiercely were they
 Adverse to me, my party, and the blood
 From whence I sprang: twice, therefore, I abroad
 Scatter'd them." "Though driven out, yet they each time
 From all parts," answer'd I, "return'd; an art
 Which yours have shown they are not skill'd to learn."

Then, peering forth from the unclosed jaw,
 Rose from his side a shade, high as the chin,
 Leaning, methought, upon its knees upraised.
 It look'd around, as eager to explore
 If there were other with me; but perceiving
 That fond imagination quench'd, with tears
 Thus spake: "If thou through this blind prison go'st,
 Led by thy lofty genius and profound,
 Where is my son? and wherefore not with thee?"

I straight replied: "Not of myself I come;

By him, who there expects me, through this clime
 Conducted, whom perchance Guido thy son
 Had in contempt." Already had his words
 And mode of punishment read me his name,
 Whence I so fully answer'd. He at once
 Exclaim'd, up starting, "How! said'st thou, he *had?*
 No longer lives he? Strikes not on his eye
 The blessed daylight?" Then, of some delay
 I made ere my reply, aware, down fell
 Supine, nor after forth appear'd he more.

Meanwhile the other, great of soul, near whom
 I yet was station'd, changed not countenance stern.
 Nor moved the neck, nor bent his ribbed side.
 "And if," continuing the first discourse,
 "They in this art," he cried, "small skill have shown;
 That doth torment me more e'en than this bed.
 But not yet fifty times shall be relumed
 Her aspect, who reigns here queen of this realm,
 Ere thou shalt know the full weight of that art.
 So to the pleasant world mayst thou return,
 As thou shalt tell me why, in all their laws,
 Against my kin this people is so fell."

"The slaughter and great havoc," I replied,
 "That color'd Arbia's flood with crimson stain —
 To these impute, that in our hallow'd dome
 Such orisons ascend." Sighing he shook
 The head, then thus resumed: "In that affray
 I stood not singly, nor, without just cause,
 Assuredly, should with the rest have stirr'd;
 But singly there I stood, when, by consent
 Of all, Florence had to the ground been razed,
 The one who openly forbade the deed."

"So may thy lineage find at last repose,"
 I thus adjured him, "as thou solve this knot,
 Which now involves my mind. If right I hear,
 Ye seem to view beforehand that which time

Leads with him, of the present uninform'd."

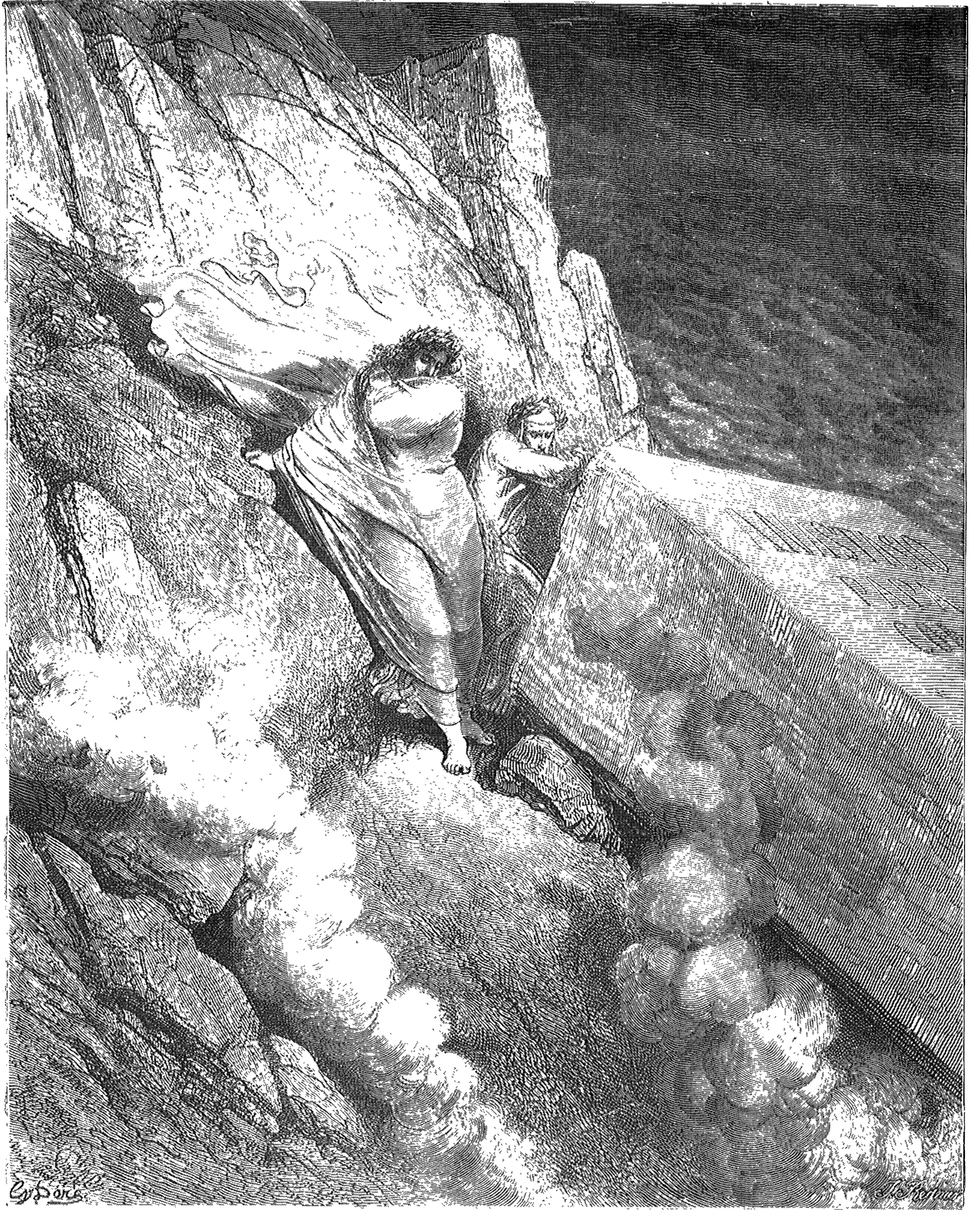
"We view, as one who hath an evil sight,"
He answer'd, "plainly, objects far remote;
So much of his large splendor yet imparts
The Almighty Ruler: but when they approach,
Or actually exist, our intellect
Then wholly fails; nor of your human state,
Except what others bring us, know we aught.
Hence therefore mayst thou understand, that all
Our knowledge in that instant shall expire,
When on futurity the portals close."

Then conscious of my fault, and by remorse
Smitten, I added thus: "Now shalt thou say
To him there fallen, that his offspring still
Is to the living join'd; and bid him know,
That if from answer, silent, I abstain'd,
'Twas that my thought was occupied, intent
Upon that error, which thy help hath solved."

But now my master summoning me back
I heard, and with more eager haste besought
The spirit to inform me, who with him
Partook his lot. He answer thus return'd:
"More than a thousand with me here are laid.
Within is Frederick, second of that name,
And the Lord Cardinal; and of the rest
I speak not." He, this said, from sight withdrew.
But I my steps toward the ancient bard
Reverting, ruminated on the words
Betokening me such ill. Onward he moved,
And thus, in going, question'd: "Whence the amaze
That holds thy senses wrapt?" I satisfied
The inquiry, and the sage enjoin'd me straight:
"Let thy safe memory store what thou hast heard
To thee importing harm; and note thou this,"
With his raised finger bidding me take heed,
"When thou shalt stand before her gracious beam,

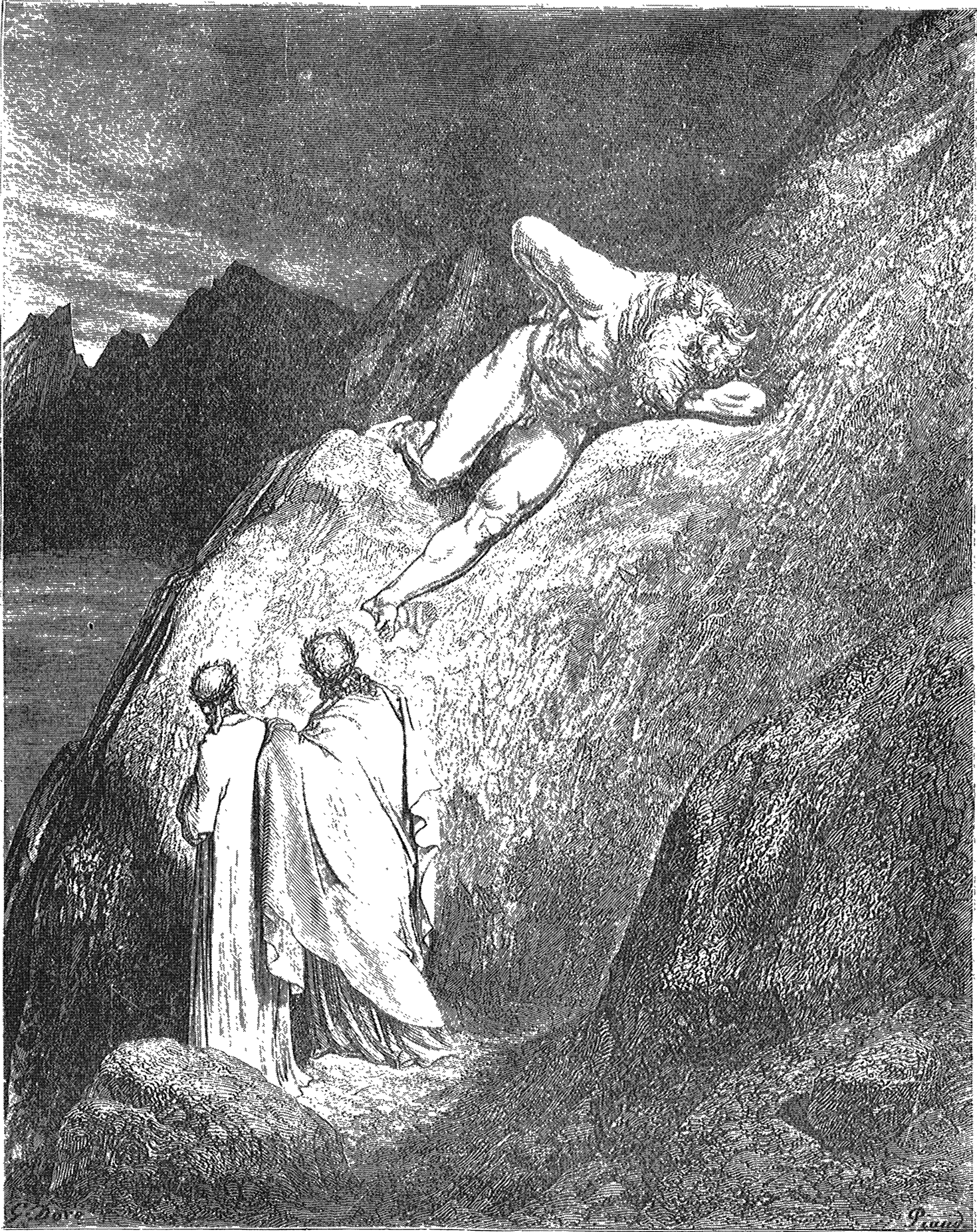
Whose bright eye all surveys, she of thy life
The future tenor will to thee unfold."

Forthwith he to the left hand turn'd his feet:
We left the wall, and towards the middle space
Went by a path that to a valley strikes,
Which e'en thus high exhaled its noisome steam.



From the profound abyss, behind the lid
Of a great monument we stood retired.

Canto XI., lines 6, 7.



And there
At point of the disparted ridge lay stretch'd
The infamy of Crete, detested brood
Of the feign'd heifer.

Canto XII., lines 11-14.

CANTO XI.

ARGUMENT.

Dante arrives at the verge of a rocky precipice which encloses the seventh circle, where he sees the sepulchre of Anastasius the heretic ; behind the lid of which pausing a little, to make himself capable by degrees of enduring the fetid smell that steamed upward from the abyss, he is instructed by Virgil concerning the manner in which the three following circles are disposed, and what description of sinners is punished in each. He then inquires the reason why the carnal, the gluttonous, the avaricious and prodigal, the wrathful and gloomy, suffer not their punishments within the city of Dis. He next asks how the crime of usury is an offense against God ; and at length the two poets go toward the place from whence a passage leads down to the seventh circle.

UPON the utmost verge of a high bank,
By craggy rocks environ'd round, we came,
Where woes beneath, more cruel yet, were stow'd ;
And here, to shun the horrible excess
Of fetid exhalation upward cast
From the profound abyss, behind the lid
Of a great monument we stood retired,
Whereon this scroll I mark'd : " I have in charge
Pope Anastasius, whom Photinus drew
From the right path." — " Ere our descent, behoves
We make delay, that somewhat first the sense,
To the dire breath accustom'd, afterward
Regard it not." My master thus ; to whom
Answering I spake : " Some compensation find,
That the time pass not wholly lost." He then :
" Lo ! how my thoughts e'en to thy wishes tend.
My son, within these rocks," he thus began,
" Are three close circles in gradation placed,
As these which now thou leavest. Each one is full
Of spirits accurst ; but that the sight alone
Hereafter may suffice thee, listen how
And for what cause in durance they abide.
" Of all malicious act abhorr'd in Heaven,

The end is injury; and all such end
 Either by force or fraud works other's woe.
 But fraud, because of man peculiar evil,
 To God is more displeasing; and beneath,
 The fraudulent are therefore doom'd to endure
 Severer pang. The violent occupy
 All the first circle; and because, to force,
 Three persons are obnoxious, in three rounds,
 Each within other separate, is it framed.
 To God, his neighbor, and himself, by man
 Force may be offer'd; to himself I say,
 And his possessions, as thou soon shalt hear
 At full. Death, violent death, and painful wounds
 Upon his neighbor he inflicts; and wastes,
 By devastation, pillage, and the flames,
 His substance. Slayers, and each one that smites
 In malice, plunderers, and all robbers, hence
 The torment undergo of the first round,
 In different herds. Man can do violence
 To himself and his own blessings: and for this,
 He in the second round must aye deplore
 With unavailing penitence his crime.
 Whoe'er deprives himself of life and light,
 In reckless lavishment his talent wastes,
 And sorrows there where he should dwell in joy.
 To God may force be offer'd, in the heart
 Denying and blaspheming his high power,
 And Nature with her kindly law contemning.
 And thence the inmost round marks with its seal
 Sodom, and Cahors, and all such as speak
 Contemptuously of the Godhead in their hearts.

"Fraud, that in every conscience leaves a sting,
 May be by man employ'd on one, whose trust
 He wins, or on another who withholds
 Strict confidence. Seems as the latter way
 Broke but the bond of love which Nature makes.

Whence in the second circle have their nest,
 Dissimulation, witchcraft, flatteries,
 Theft, falsehood, simony, all who seduce
 To lust, or set their honesty at pawn,
 With such vile scum as these. The other way
 Forgets both Nature's general love, and that
 Which thereto added afterward gives birth
 To special faith. Whence in the lesser circle,
 Point of the universe, dread seat of Dis,
 The traitor is eternally consumed."

I thus: "Instructor, clearly thy discourse
 Proceeds, distinguishing the hideous chasm
 And its inhabitants with skill exact.
 But tell me this: they of the dull, fat pool,
 Whom the rain beats, or whom the tempest drives,
 Or who with tongues so fierce conflicting meet,
 Wherefore within the city fire-illumed
 Are not these punish'd, if God's wrath be on them?
 And if it be not, wherefore in such guise
 Are they condemn'd?" He answer thus return'd:
 "Wherefore in dotage wanders thus thy mind,
 Not so accustom'd? or what other thoughts
 Possess it? Dwell not in thy memory
 The words, wherein thy ethic page describes
 Three dispositions averse to Heaven's will,
 Incontinence, malice, and mad brutishness,
 And how incontinence the least offends
 God, and least guilt incurs? If well thou note
 This judgment, and remember who they are,
 Without these walls to vain repentance doom'd,
 Thou shalt discern why they apart are placed
 From these fell spirits, and less wreakful pours
 Justice divine on them its vengeance down."

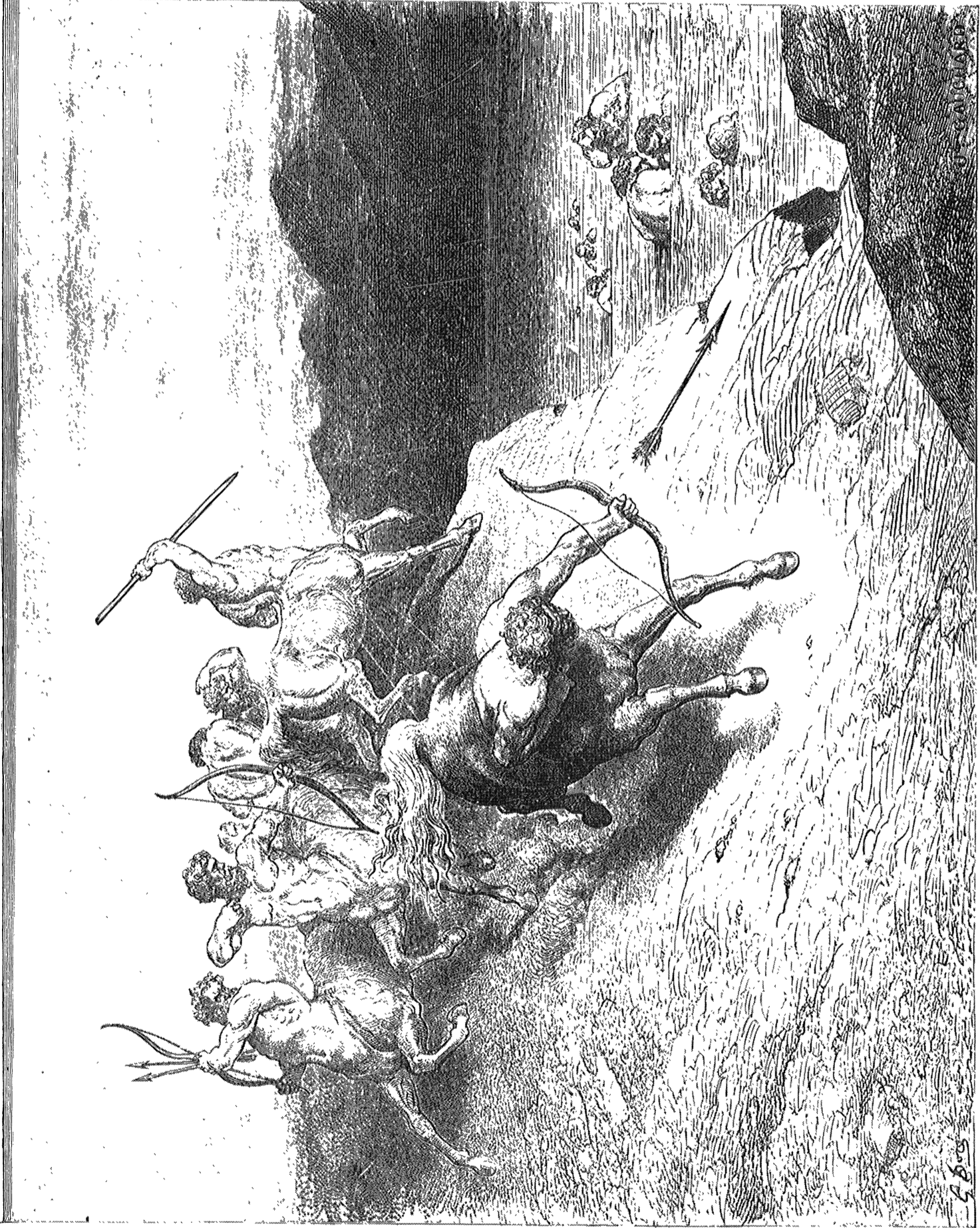
"Oh, sun! who healest all imperfect sight,
 Thou so content'st me, when thou solvest my doubt,
 That ignorance not less than knowledge charms.

Yet somewhat turn thee back," I in these words
Continued, "where thou said'st, that usury
Offends celestial Goodness; and this knot
Perplex'd unravel." He thus made reply:
"Philosophy, to an attentive ear,
Clearly points out, not in one part alone,
How imitative Nature takes her course
From the celestial mind, and from its art:
And where her laws the Stagirite unfolds,
Not many leaves scann'd o'er, observing well
Thou shalt discover, that your art on her
Obsequious follows, as the learner treads
In his instructor's step; so that your art
Deserves the name of second in descent
From God. These two, if thou recall to mind
Creation's holy book, from the beginning
Were the right source of life and excellence
To human kind. But in another path
The usurer walks; and Nature in herself
And in her follower thus he sets at nought,
Placing elsewhere his hope. But follow now
My steps on forward journey bent; for now
The Pisces play with undulating glance
Along the horizon, and the Wain lies all
O'er the northwest; and onward there a space
Is our steep passage down the rocky height."



One cried from far : " Say, to what pain ye come
Condemn'd, who down this steep have journey'd."

Can. o XII., lines 58, 59.



We to those beasts, that rapid strode along,
Drew near.

Canto XII., lines 73, 74.

CANTO XII.

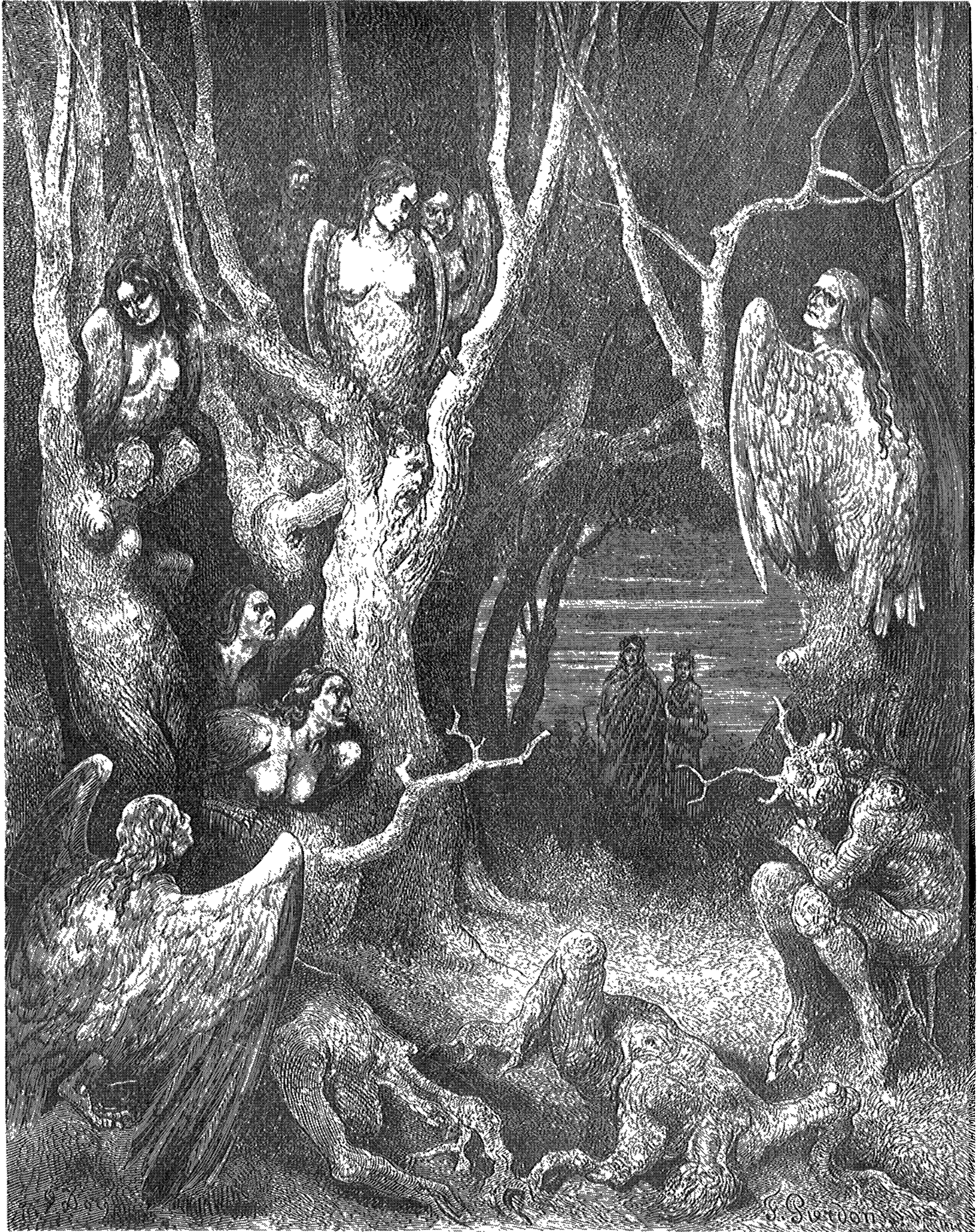
ARGUMENT.

Descending by a very rugged way into the seventh circle, where the violent are punished, Dante and his leader find it guarded by the Minotaur; whose fury being pacified by Virgil, they step downwards from crag to crag; till drawing near the bottom, they descry a river of blood, wherein are tormented such as have committed violence against their neighbor. At these, when they strive to emerge from the blood, a troop of Centaurs, running along the side of the river, aim their arrows; and three of their band opposing our travelers at the foot of the steep, Virgil prevails so far, that one consents to carry them both across the stream; and on their passage Dante is informed by him of the course of the river, and of those that are punished therein.

THE place, where to descend the precipice
We came, was rough as Alp; and on its verge
Such object lay, as every eye would shun.
As is that ruin, which Adice's stream
On this side Trento struck, shouldering the wave,
Or loosed by earthquake or for lack of prop;
For from the mountain's summit, whence it moved
To the low level, so the headlong rock
Is shiver'd, that some passage it might give
To him who from above would pass; e'en such
Into the chasm was that descent: and there
At point of the disparted ridge lay stretch'd
The infamy of Crete, detested brood
Of the feign'd heifer: and at sight of us
It gnaw'd itself, as one with rage distract.
To him my guide exclaim'd: "Perchance thou deem'st
The King of Athens here, who, in the world
Above, thy death contrived. Monster! avaunt!
He comes not tutor'd by thy sister's art,
But to behold your torments is he come."
Like to a bull, that with impetuous spring
Darts, at the moment when the fatal blow
Hath struck him but unable to proceed

Plunges on either side; so saw I plunge
The Minotaur; whereat the sage exclaim'd:
"Run to the passage! while he storms, 'tis well
That thou descend." Thus down our road we took
Through those dilapidated crags, that oft
Moved underneath my feet, to weight like theirs
Unused. I pondering went, and thus he spake:
"Perhaps thy thoughts are of this ruin'd steep,
Guarded by the brute violence, which I
Have vanquished now. Know then, that when I erst
Hither descended to the nether hell,
This rock was not yet fallen. But past doubt
(If well I mark), not long ere He arrived,
Who carried off from Dis the mighty spoil
Of the highest circle, then through all its bounds
Such trembling seized the deep concave and foul,
I thought the universe was thrill'd with love,
Whereby, there are who deem, the world hath oft
Been into chaos turn'd: and in that point,
Here, and elsewhere, that old rock toppled down.
But fix thine eyes beneath: the river of blood
Approaches, in the which all those are steep'd,
Who have by violence injur'd." Oh, blind lust!
Oh, foolish wrath! who so dost goad us on
In the brief life, and in the eternal then
Thus miserably o'erwhelm us. I beheld.
An ample fosse, that in a bow was bent,
As circling all the plain; for so my guide
Had told. Between it and the rampart's base,
On trail ran Centaurs, with keen arrows arm'd,
As to the chase they on the earth were wont.

At seeing us descend they each one stood;
And issuing from the troop, three sped with bows
And missile weapons chosen first; of whom
One cried from far: "Say, to what pain ye come
Condemn'd, who down this steep have journey'd. Speak



Here the brute Harpies make their nest.

Canto XIII., line 11.



And straight the trunk exclaimed, "Why pluck'st thou me?"

Canto XIII., line 34.

From whence ye stand, or else the bow I draw.

To whom my guide: "Our answer shall be made
To Chiron, there, when nearer him we come.
Ill was thy mind, thus ever quick and rash."
Then me he touch'd, and spake: "Nessus is this,
Who for the fair Deïanira died,
And wrought himself revenge for his own fate.
He in the midst, that on his breast looks down,
Is the great Chiron who Achilles nursed;
That other, Pholus, prone to wrath." Around
The fosse these go by thousands, aiming shafts
At whatsoever spirit dares emerge
From out the blood, more than his guilt allows.

We to those beasts, that rapid strode along,
Drew near; when Chiron took an arrow forth,
And with the notch push'd back his shaggy beard
To the cheek-bone, then, his great mouth to view
Exposing, to his fellows thus exclaim'd:
"Are ye aware, that he who comes behind
Moves what he touches? The feet of the dead
Are not so wont." My trusty guide, who now
Stood near his breast, where the two natures join,
Thus made reply: "He is indeed alive,
And solitary so must needs by me
Be shown the gloomy vale, thereto induced
By strict necessity, not by delight.
She left her joyful harpings in the sky,
Who this new office to my care consign'd.
He is no robber, no dark spirit I.
But by that virtue, which empowers my step
To tread so wild a path, grant us, I pray,
One of thy band, whom we may trust secure,
Who to the ford may lead us, and convey
Across, him mounted on his back; for he
Is not a spirit that may walk the air."

Then on his right breast turning, Chiron thus

To Nessus spake: "Return, and be their guide.
 And if you chance to cross another troop,
 Command them keep aloof." Onward we moved,
 The faithful escort by our side, along
 The border of the crimson-seething flood,
 Whence, from those steep'd within, loud shrieks arose.

Some there I mark'd, as high as to their brow
 Immersed, of whom the mighty Centaur thus:
 "These are the souls of tyrants, who were given
 To blood and rapine. Here they wail aloud
 Their merciless wrongs. Here Alexander dwells,
 And Dionysius fell, who many a year
 Of woe wrought for fair Sicily. That brow,
 Whereon the hair so jetty clustering hangs,
 Is Azzolino; that with flaxen locks
 Obizzo of Este, in the world destroy'd
 By his foul step-son." To the bard revered
 I turn'd me round, and thus he spake: "Let him
 Be to thee now first leader, me but next
 To him in rank." Then further on a space
 The Centaur passed, near some, who at the throat
 Were extant from the wave; and, showing us
 A spirit by itself apart retired,
 Exclaim'd: "He in God's bosom smote the heart,
 Which yet is honor'd on the bank of Thames."

A race I next espied who held the head,
 And even all the bust, above the stream.
 'Midst these I many a face remember'd well.
 Thus shallow more and more the blood became,
 So that at last it but imbrued the feet;
 And there our passage lay athwart the fosse.

"As ever on this side the boiling wave
 Thou seest diminishing," the Centaur said,
 "So on the other, be thou well assured,
 It lower still and lower sinks its bed,
 Till in that part it re-uniting join,

Where 'tis the lot of tyranny to mourn.
There Heaven's stern justice lays chastising hand
On Attila, who was the scourge of earth,
On Sextus and on Pyrrhus, and extracts
Tears ever by the seething flood unlock'd
From the Rinieri, of Corneto this,
Pazzo the other named, who fill'd the ways
With violence and war." This said, he turn'd,
And quitting us, alone re-pass'd the ford.

CANTO XIII.

ARGUMENT.

Still in the seventh circle, Dante enters its second compartment, which contains both those who have done violence on their own persons and those who have violently consumed their goods; the first changed into rough and knotted trees whereon the harpies build their nests, the latter chased and torn by black female mastiffs. Among the former, Piero delle Vigne is one, who tells him the cause of his having committed suicide, and moreover in what manner the souls are transformed into those trunks. Of the latter crew he recognizes Lano, a Siennese, and Giacomo, a Paduan; and lastly, a Florentine, who had hung himself from his own roof, speaks to him of the calamities of his countrymen.

ERE Nessus yet had reach'd the other bank,
We enter'd on a forest, where no track
Of steps had worn a way. Not verdant there
The foliage, but of dusky hue; not light
The boughs and tapering, but with knares deform'd
And matted thick: fruits there were none, but thorns
Instead, with venom fill'd. Less sharp than these,
Less intricate the brakes, wherein abide
Those animals, that hate the cultured fields,
Betwixt Corneto and Cecina's stream.

Here the brute Harpies make their nest, the same
Who from the Strophades the Trojan band
Drove with dire boding of their future woe.
Broad are their pennons, of the human form
Their neck and countenance, arm'd with talons keen
The feet, and the huge belly fledge with wings.
These sit and wail on the drear mystic wood.

The kind instructor in these words began:
"Ere further thou proceed, know thou art now
I' th' second round, and shalt be, till thou come
Upon the horrid sand: look therefore well
Around thee, and such things thou shalt behold,
As would my speech discredit." On all sides

I heard sad plainings breathe, and none could see
 From whom they might have issued. In amaze
 Fast bound I stood He, as it seem'd, believed
 That I had thought so many voices came
 From some amid those thickets close conceal'd,
 And thus his speech resumed: "If thou lop off
 A single twig from one of those ill plants,
 The thought thou hast conceived will vanish quite."

Thereat a little stretching forth my hand,
 From a great wilding gathered I a branch,
 And straight the trunk exclaim'd, "Why pluck'st thou me?"
 Then, as the dark blood trickled down its side,
 These words it added: "Wherefore tear'st me thus?
 Is there no touch of mercy in thy breast?
 Men once were we, that now are rooted here.
 Thy hand might well have spared us, had we been
 The souls of serpents." As a brand yet green,
 That burning at one end from the other sends
 A groaning sound, and hisses with the wind
 That forces out its way, so burst at once
 Forth from the broken splinter words and blood.

I, letting fall the bough, remain'd as one
 Assail'd by terror; and the sage replied:
 "If he, O injured spirit! could have believed
 What he hath seen but in my verse described,
 He never against thee had stretch'd his hand.
 But I, because the thing surpass'd belief,
 Prompted him to this deed, which even now
 Myself I rue. But tell me who thou wast;
 That, for this wrong to do thee some amends,
 In the upper world (for thither to return
 Is granted him) thy fame he may revive."
 "That pleasant word of thine," the trunk replied,
 "Hath so inveigled me, that I from speech
 Cannot refrain, wherein if I indulge
 A little longer, in the snare detain'd,

Count it not grievous. I it was, who held
 Both keys to Frederick's heart, and turn'd the wards,
 Opening and shutting, with a skill so sweet,
 That besides me, into his inmost breast
 Scarce any other could admittance find.
 The faith I bore to my high charge was such,
 It cost me the life-blood that warm'd my veins.
 The harlot, who ne'er turn'd her gloating eyes
 From Cæsar's household, common vice and pest
 Of courts, 'gainst me inflamed the minds of all;
 And to Augustus they so spread the flame,
 That my glad honors changed to bitter woes.
 My soul, disdainful and disgusted, sought
 Refuge in death from scorn, and I became,
 Just as I was, unjust toward myself.
 By the new roots, which fix this stem, I swear,
 That never faith I broke to my liege lord,
 Who merited such honor; and of you,
 If any to the world indeed return,
 Clear he from wrong my memory, that lies
 Yet prostrate under envy's cruel blow."

First somewhat pausing, till the mournful words
 Were ended, then to me the bard began:
 "Lose not the time; but speak, and of him ask,
 If more thou wish to learn." Whence I replied
 "Question thou him again of whatso'er
 Will, as thou think'st, content me; for no power
 Have I to ask, such pity is at my heart."

He thus resumed: "So may he do for thee
 Freely what thou entreatest, as thou yet
 Be pleas'd, imprison'd spirit! to declare,
 How in these gnarled joints the soul is tied;
 And whether any ever from such frame
 Be loosen'd, if thou canst, that also tell."

Thereat the trunk breathed hard, and the wind soon
 Changed into sounds articulate like these:

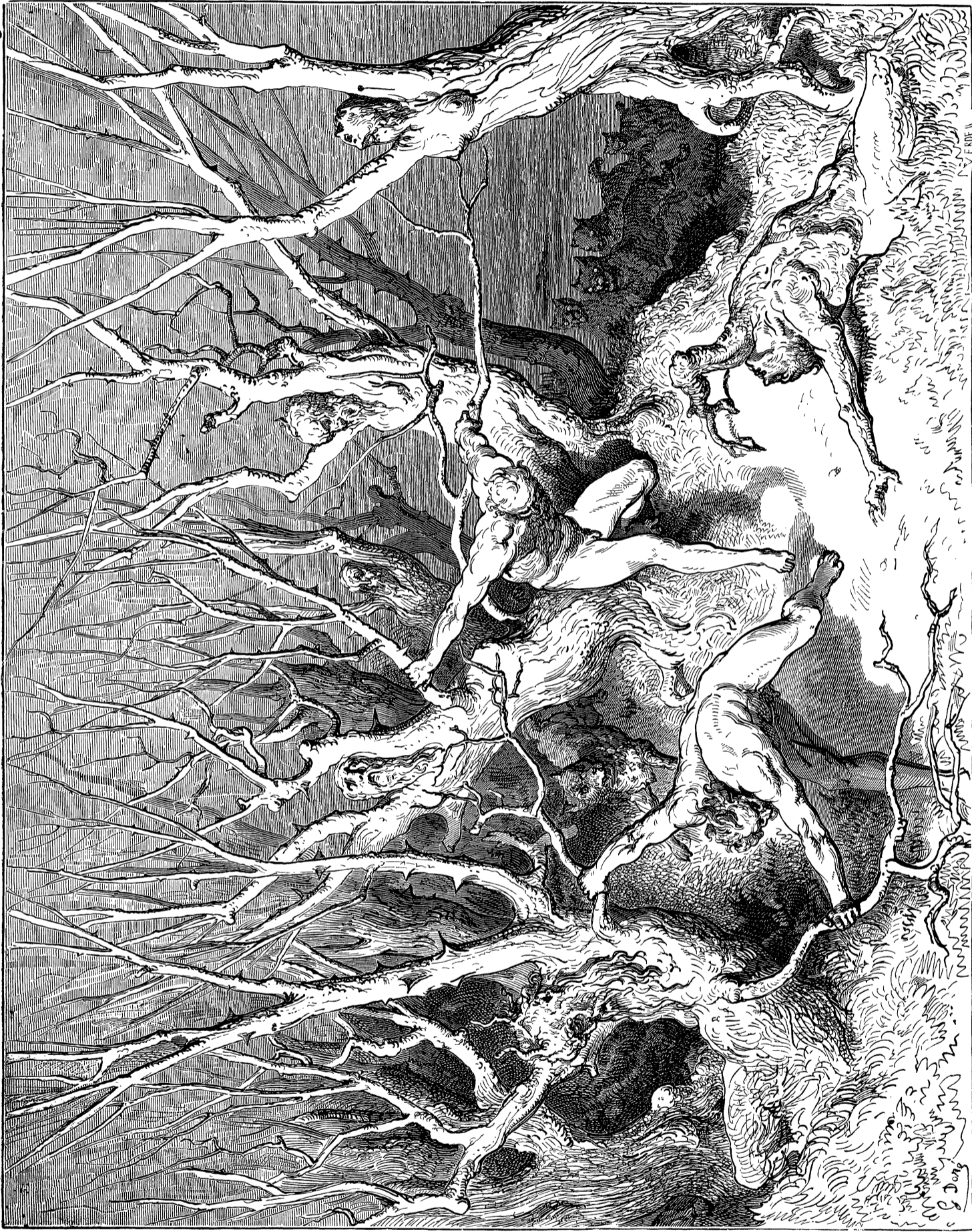
“Briefly ye shall be answer’d. When departs
 The fierce soul from the body, by itself
 Thence torn asunder, to the seventh gulf
 By Minos doom’d, into the wood it falls,
 No place assign’d, but wheresoever chance
 Hurls it; there sprouting as a grain of spelt,
 It rises to a sapling, growing thence
 A savage plant. The Harpies, on its leaves
 Then feeding, cause both pain, and for the pain
 A vent to grief. We, as the rest, shall come
 For our own spoils, yet not so that with them
 We may again be clad; for what a man
 Takes from himself it is not just he have.
 Here we perforce shall drag them; and throughout
 The dismal glade our bodies shall be hung,
 Each on the wild thorn of his wretched shade.”

Attentive yet to listen to the trunk
 We stood, expecting further speech, when us
 A noise surprised; as when a man perceives
 The wild boar and the hunt approach his place
 Of station’d watch, who of the beasts and boughs
 Loud rustling round him hears. And lo! there came
 Two naked, torn with briers, in headlong flight,
 That they before them broke each fan o’ th’ wood.
 “Haste now,” the foremost cried, “now haste thee, death!”
 The other, as seem’d, impatient of delay,
 Exclaiming, “Lano! not so bent for speed
 Thy sinews, in the lists of Toppo’s field.”
 And then, for that perchance no longer breath
 Sufficed him, of himself and of a bush
 One group he made. Behind him was the wood
 Full of black female mastiffs, gaunt and fleet,
 As greyhounds that have newly slipt the leash.
 On him, who squatted down, they stuck their fangs,
 And having rent him piecemeal bore away
 The tortured limbs.† My guide then seized my hand,

And led me to the thicket, which in vain
Mourn'd through its bleeding wounds: "O Giacomo
Of Sant' Andrea! what avails it thee,"
It cried, "that of me thou hast made thy screen!
For thy ill life, what blame on me recoils?"

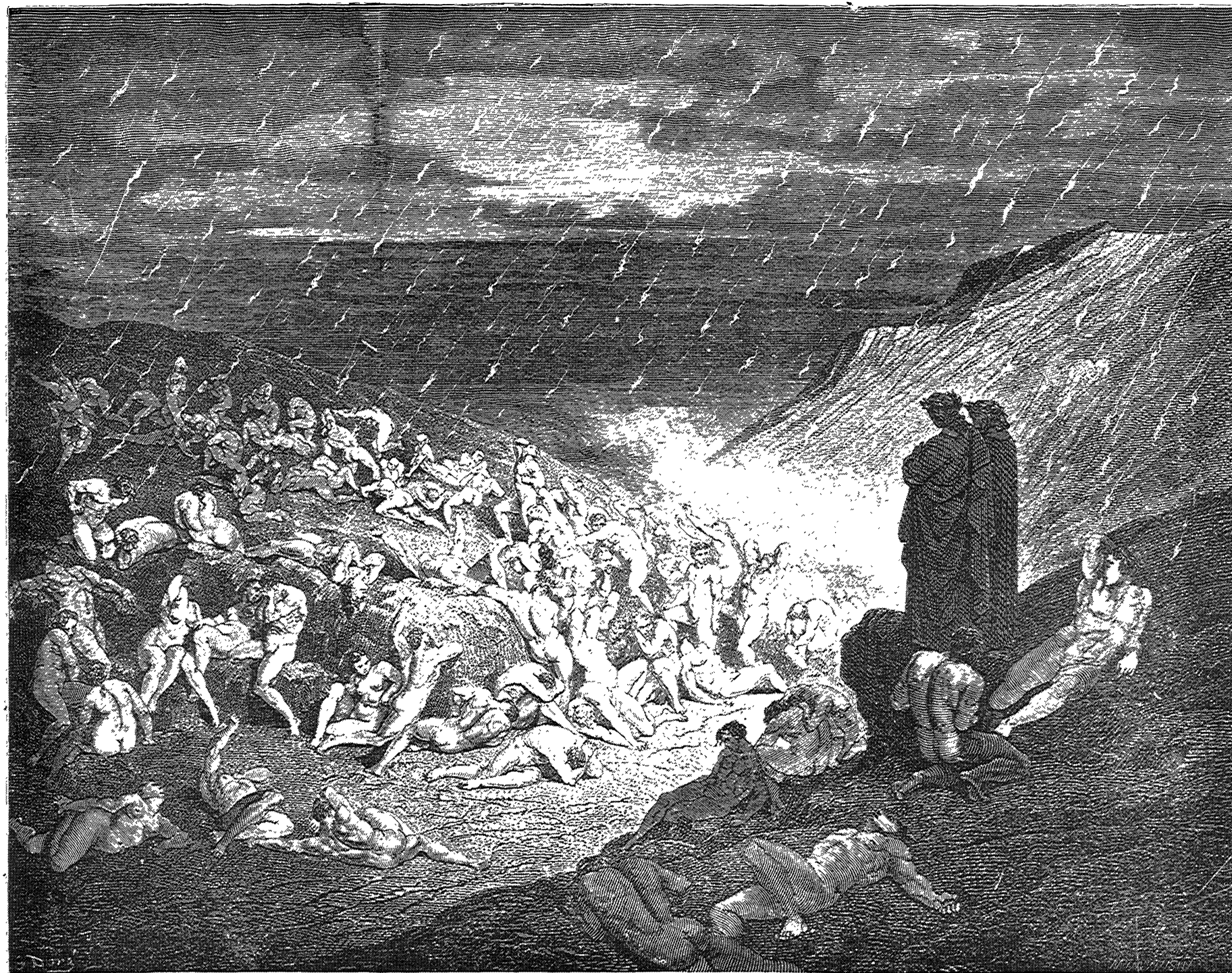
When o'er it he had paused, my master spake;
"Say, who was thou, that at so many points
Breathest out with blood thy lamentable speech?"

He answer'd: "Oh, ye spirits! arrived in time
To spy the shameful havoc that from me
My leaves have sever'd thus, gather them up,
And at the foot of their sad parent-tree
Carefully lay them. In that city I dwelt,
Who for the Baptist her first patron changed,
Whence he for this shall cease not with his art
To work' her woe: and if there still remain'd not
On Arno's passage some faint glimpse of him,
Those citizens, who rear'd once more her walls
Upon the ashes left by Attila,
Had labor'd without profit of their toil.
I slung the fatal noose from my own roof."



“Haste now,” the foremost cried, “now haste thee, death!”

Canto XIII., line 120.



Unceasing was the play of wretched hands,
Now this, now that way glancing, to shake off
The heat, still falling fresh

CANTO XIV.

ARGUMENT.

They arrive at the beginning of the third of those compartments into which this seventh circle is divided. It is a plain of dry and hot sand, where three kinds of violence are punished; namely, against God, against Nature, and against Art; and those who have thus sinned are tormented by flakes of fire, which are eternally showering down upon them. Among the violent against God is found Capaneus, whose blasphemies they hear. Next, turning to the left along the forest of self-slayers, and having journeyed a little onwards, they meet with a streamlet of blood that issues from the forest and traverses the sandy plain. Here Virgil speaks to our poet of a huge ancient statue that stands within Mount Ida in Crete, from a fissure in which statue there is a dripping of tears, from which the said streamlet, together with the three other infernal rivers, are formed.

SOON as the charity of native land
Wrought in my bosom, I the scatter'd leaves
Collected, and to him restored, who now
Was hoarse with utterance. To the limit thence
We came, which from the third the second round
Divides, and where of justice is display'd
Contrivance horrible. Things then first seen
Clearlier to manifest, I tell how next
A plain we reach'd, that from its sterile bed
Each plant repell'd. The mournful wood waves round
Its garland on all sides, as round the wood
Spreads the sad fosse. There, on the very edge,
Our steps we stay'd. It was an area wide
Of arid sand and thick, resembling most
The soil that erst by Cato's foot was trod.

Vengeance of heaven! Oh! how shouldst thou be fear'd
By all, who read what here mine eyes beheld.

Of naked spirits many a flock I saw,
All weeping piteously, to different laws
Subjected; for on the earth some lay supine,
Some crouching close were seated, others paced
Incessantly round; the latter tribe

More numerous, those fewer who beneath
 The torment lay, but louder in their grief.
 O'er all the sand fell slowly wafting down
 Dilated flakes of fire, as flakes of snow
 On Alpine summit, when the wind is hush'd.
 As, in the torrid Indian clime, the son
 Of Ammon saw, upon his warrior band
 Descending, solid flames, that to the ground
 Come down; whence he bethought him with his troop
 To trample on the soil; for easier thus
 The vapor was extinguish'd, while alone:
 So fell the eternal fiery flood, wherewith
 The marle glowed underneath, as under stove
 The viands, doubly to augment the pain.
 Unceasing was the play of wretched hands,
 Now this, now that way glancing, to shake off
 The heat, still falling fresh. I thus began:
 "Instructor! thou who all things overcomest,
 Except the hardy demons that rush'd forth
 To stop our entrance at the gate, say who
 Is yon huge spirit, that, as seems, heeds not
 The burning, but lies writhen in proud scorn,
 As by the sultry tempest immatured?"

Straight he himself, who was aware I ask'd
 My guide of him, exclaim'd: "Such as I was
 When living, dead such now I am. If Jove
 Weary his workman out, from whom in ire
 He snatch'd the lightnings, that at my last day
 Transfix'd me; if the rest he weary out,
 At their black smithy laboring by turns,
 In Mongibello, while he cries aloud,
 'Help, help, good Mulciber!' as erst he cried
 In the Phlegræan warfare; and the bolts
 Launch he, full aim'd at me, with all his might;
 He never should enjoy a sweet revenge."

Then thus my guide, in accent higher raised

Than I before had heard him: "Capaneus!
 Thou art more punish'd, in that this thy pride
 Lives not unquench'd: no torment, save thy rage,
 Were to thy fury proportion'd full."

Next turning round to me, with milder lip
 He spake: "This of the seven kings was one,
 Who girt the Theban walls with siege, and held,
 As still he seems to hold, God in disdain,
 And sets his high omnipotence at nought.
 But, as I told him, his spiteful mood
 Is ornament well suits the breast that wears it.
 Follow me now; and look thou set not yet
 Thy foot in the hot sand, but to the wood
 Keep ever close." Silently on we pass'd
 To where there gushes from the forest's bound
 A little brook, whose crimson'd wave yet lifts
 My hair with horror. As the rill, that runs
 From Bulicame, to be portion'd out
 Among the sinful women; so ran this
 Down through the sand; its bottom and each bank
 Stone-built, and either margin at its side,
 Whereon I straight perceived our passage lay.

"Of all that I have shown thee, since that gate
 We enter'd first, whose threshold is to none
 Denied, nought else so worthy of regard,
 As is this river, has thine eye discern'd,
 O'er which the flaming volley all is quench'd."

So spake the guide; and I him thence besought,
 That having given me appetite to know,
 The food he too would give, that hunger craved.

"In midst of ocean," forthwith he began,
 "A desolate country lies, which Crete is named.
 Under whose monarch, in old times, the world
 Lived pure and chaste. A mountain rises there,
 Call'd Ida, joyous once with leaves and streams,
 Deserted now like a forbidden thing.

It was the spot which Rhea, Saturn's spouse,
 Chose for the secret cradle of her son;
 And better to conceal him, drown'd in shouts
 His infant cries. Within the mount, upright
 An ancient form there stands, and huge, that turns
 His shoulders towards Damiata; and at Rome,
 As in his mirror, looks. Of finest gold
 His head is shaped, pure silver at the breast
 And arms, thence to the middle is of brass,
 And downward all beneath well-temper'd steel,
 Save the right foot of potter's clay, on which
 Than on the other more erect he stands,
 Each part, except the gold, is sent throughout;
 And from the fissure tears distill, which join'd
 Penetrate to that cave. They in their course
 Thus far precipitated down the rock,
 Form Acheron, and Styx, and Phlegethon;
 Then by this straiten'd channel passing hence
 Beneath, e'en to the lowest depth of all,
 Form there Cocytus, of whose lake (thyself
 Shalt see it) I here give thee no account."

Then I to him: "If from our world this sluice
 Be thus derived; wherefore to us but now
 Appears it at this edge?" He straight replied:
 "The place, thou know'st, is round: and though great part
 Thou have already past, still to the left
 Descending to the nethermost, not yet
 Hast thou the circuit made of the whole orb.
 Wherefore, if aught of new to us appear,
 It needs not bring up wonder in thy looks."

Then I again inquired: "Where flow the streams
 Of Phlegethon and Lethe? for of one
 Thou tell'st not; and the other, of that shower,
 Thou say'st, is form'd." He answer thus return'd:
 "Doubtless thy questions all well pleased I hear.
 Yet the red seething wave might have resolved

One thou proposest. Lethe thou shalt see,
But not within this hollow, in the place
Whether, to lave themselves, the spirits go,
Whose blame hath been by penitence removed.”
He added: “Time is now we quit the wood.
Look thou my steps pursue: the margins give
Safe passage, unimpeded by the flames;
For over them all vapor is extinct.”

CANTO XV.

ARGUMENT.

Taking their way upon one of the mounds by which the streamlet, spoken of in the last canto, was embanked, and having gone so far as they could no longer have discerned the forest if they had turned round to look for it, they meet a troop of spirits that come along the sand by the side of the pier. These are they who have done violence to Nature; and amongst them Dante distinguishes Brunetto Latini, who had been formerly his master; with whom, turning a little backward, he holds a discourse which occupies the remainder of this canto.

ONE of the solid margins bears us now
Envelop'd in the mist, that, from the stream
Arising, hovers o'er, and saves from fire
Both piers and water. As the Flemings rear
Their mound, 'twixt Ghent and Bruges, to chase back
The ocean, fearing his tumultuous tide
That drives toward them; or the Paduans theirs
Along the Brenta, to defend their towns
And castles, ere the genial warmth be felt
On Chiarentana's top; such were the mounds,
So framed, though not in height or bulk to these
Made equal, by the master, whosoe'er
He was, that raised them here. We from the wood
Were now so far removed, that turning round
I might not have discern'd it, when we met
A troop of spirits, who came beside the pier.

They each one eyed us, as at eventide
One eyes another under a new moon;
And toward us sharpen'd their sight, as keen
As an old tailor at his needle's eye.

Thus narrowly explored by all the tribe,
I was agnized of one, who by the skirt
Caught me, and cried, "What wonder have we here?"

And I, when he to me outstretch'd his arm,

Intently fix'd my ken on his parch'd looks,
 That, although smirch'd with fire, they hinder'd not
 But I remember'd him; and towards his face
 My head inclining, answer'd: "Ser Brunetto!
 And are ye here?" He thus to me: "My son!
 Oh, let it not displease thee, if Brunetto
 Latini but a little space with thee
 Turn back, and leave his fellows to proceed."

I thus to him replied: "Much as I can,
 I thereto pray thee; and if thou be willing
 That I here seat me with thee, I consent;
 His leave, with whom I journey, first obtain'd."

"Oh, son!" said he, "whoever of this throng
 One instant stops, lies then a hundred years,
 No fan to ventilate him, when the fire
 Smites sorest. Pass thou therefore on. I close
 Will at thy garments walk, and then rejoin
 My troop, who go mourning their endless doom."

I dared not from the path descend to tread
 On equal ground with him, but held my head
 Bent down, as one who walks in reverent guise.

"What chance or destiny," thus he began,
 "Ere the last day, conducts thee here below?
 And who is this that shows to thee the way?"

"There up aloft," I answer'd, "in the life
 Serene, I wander'd in a valley lost,
 Before mine age had to its fullness reach'd.
 But yester-morn I left it: then once more
 Into that vale returning, him I met;
 And by this path homeward he leads me back."

"If thou," he answer'd, "follow but thy star,
 Thou canst not miss at last a glorious haven;
 Unless in fairer days my judgment err'd.
 And if my fate so early had not chanced,
 Seeing the heavens thus bounteous to thee, I
 Had gladly given thee comfort in thy work."

But that ungrateful and malignant race,
 Who in old times came down from Fesole,
 Ay and still smack of their rough mountain-flint,
 Will for their good deeds show thee enmity.
 Nor wonder; for amongst ill-savor'd crabs
 It suits not the sweet fig-tree lay her fruit.
 Old fame reports them in the world for blind,
 Covetous, envious, proud. Look to it well:
 Take heed thou cleanse thee of their ways. For thee,
 Thy fortune hath such honor in reserve,
 That thou by either party shalt be craved
 With hunger keen: but be the fresh herb far
 From the goat's tooth. The herd of Fesole
 May of themselves make litter, not touch the plant,
 If any such yet spring on their rank bed,
 In which the holy seed revives, transmitted
 From those true Romans, who still there remain'd,
 When it was made the nest of so much ill."

"Were all my wish fulfilled," I straight replied,
 "Though from the confines of man's nature yet
 Hadst not been driven forth; for in my mind
 Is fix'd, and now strikes full upon my heart,
 The dear, benign, paternal image, such
 As thine was, when so lately thou didst teach me
 The way for man to win eternity:
 And how I prized the lesson, it behoves,
 That, long as life endures, my tongue should speak.
 What of my fate thou tell'st, that write I down;
 And, with another text to comment on,
 For her I keep it, the celestial dame,
 Who will know all, if I to her arrive.
 This only would I have thee clearly note:
 That, so my conscience have no plea against me,
 Do Fortune as she list, I stand prepared.
 Not new or strange such earnest to mine ear.
 Speed Fortune then her wheel, as likes her best;

The clown his mattock; all things have their course.”

Whereat my sapient guide upon his right
Turn'd himself back, then looked at me, and spake:
“He listens to good purpose who takes note.”

I not the less still on my way proceed,
Discoursing with Brunetto, and inquire
Who are most known and chief among his tribe.

“To know of some is well”; he thus replied,
“But of the rest may best beseem.

Time would not serve us for report so long.
In brief I tell thee, that all these were clerks,
Men of great learning and no less renown,
By one same sin polluted in the world.
With them is Priscian; and Accorso's son,
Francesco, herds among that wretched throng;
And, if the wish of so impure a blotch
Possess'd thee, him thou also mightst have seen,
Why by the servants' servant was transferr'd
From Arno's seat to Bacchiglione, where
His ill-strain'd nerves he left. I more would add,
But must from further speech and onward way
Alike desist; for yonder I behold
A mist new risen on the sandy plain.
A company, with whom I may not sort,
Approaches. I commend my Treasure to thee,
Wherein I yet survive; my sole request.”

This said, he turn'd, and seemed as one of those
Who o'er Verona's champaign try their speed
For the green mantle; and of them he seem'd
Not he who loses but who gains the prize.

CANTO XVI.

ARGUMENT.

Journeying along the pier, which crosses the sand, they are now so near the end of it as to hear the noise of the stream falling into the eighth circle, when they meet the spirits of three military men ; who judging Dante, from his dress, to be a countryman of theirs, entreat him to stop. He complies, and speaks with them. The two poets then reach the place where the water descends, being the termination of this third compartment in the seventh circle ; and here Virgil having thrown down into the hollow a cord, wherewith Dante was girt, they behold at that signal a monstrous and horrible figure come swimming up to them.

NOW came I where the water's din was heard,
As down it fell into the other round,
Resounding like the hum of swarming bees :
When forth together issued from a troop,
That pass'd beneath the fierce tormenting storm,
Three spirits, running swift. They towards us came,
And each one cried aloud, "Oh! do thou stay,
Whom, by the fashion of thy garb, we deem
To be some inmate of our evil land."

Ah me! what wounds I mark'd upon their limbs,
Recent and old, inflicted by the flames.
E'en the remembrance of them grieves me yet.

Attentive to their cry, my teacher paused,
And turn'd to me his visage, and then spake :
"Wait now: our courtesy these merit well ;
And were 't not for the nature of the place,
Whence glide the fiery darts, I should have said,
That haste had better suited thee than them."

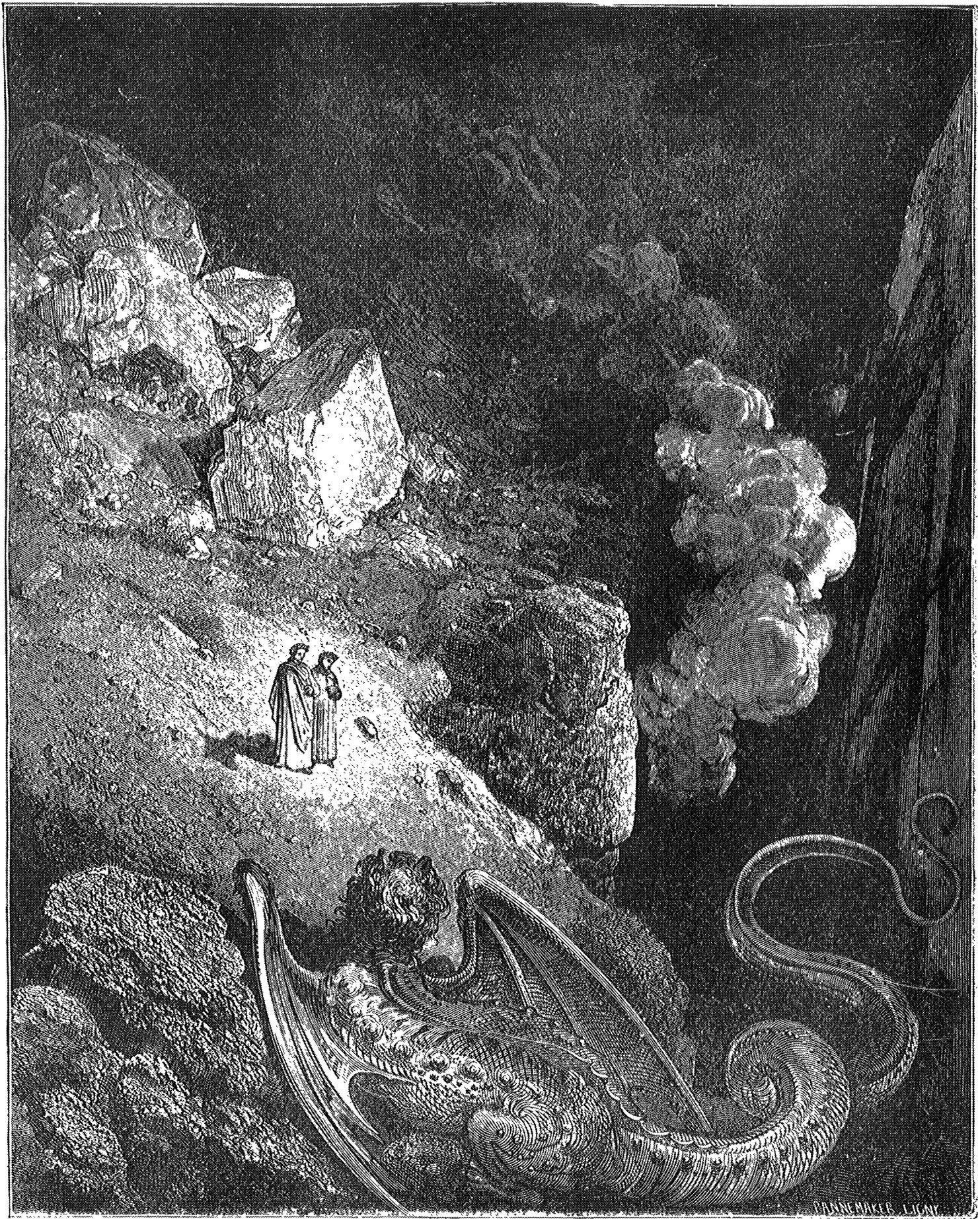
They, when we stopp'd, resumed their ancient wail,
And, soon as they had reach'd us, all the three
Whirl'd round together in one restless wheel.
As naked champions, smear'd with slippery oil,
Are wont, intent, to watch their place of hold



“Ser Brunetto !

And are ye here ?”

Canto XV., lines 28, 29.



Forthwith that image vile of Fraud appear'd.

Canto XVII, line 7.

And vantage, ere in closer strife they meet;
 Thus each one, as he wheel'd, his countenance
 At me directed, so that opposite
 The neck moved ever to the twinkling feet.

“If woe of this unsound and dreary waste,”
 Thus one began, “added to our sad cheer
 Thus peel'd with flame, do call forth scorn on us
 And our entreaties, let our great renown
 Incline thee to inform us who thou art,
 That dost imprint, with living feet unharm'd,
 The soil of Hell. He, in whose track thou seest
 My steps pursuing, naked though he be
 And reft of all, was of more high estate
 Than thou believest; grandchild of the chaste
 Gualdrada, him they Guidoguerra call'd,
 Who in his lifetime many a noble act
 Achieved, both by his wisdom and his sword.
 The other, next to me that beats the sand,
 Is Aldobrandi, name deserving well,
 In the upper world, of honor; and myself,
 Who in this torment do partake with them,
 Am Rusticucci, whom, past doubt, my wife,
 Of savage temper, more than aught beside
 Hath to this evil brought.” If from the fire
 I had been shelter'd, down amidst them straight
 I then had cast me; nor my guide, I deem,
 Would have restrain'd my going: but that fear
 Of the dire burning vanquish'd the desire,
 Which made me eager of their wish'd embrace.

I then began: “Not scorn, but grief much more,
 Such as long time alone can cure, your doom
 Fix'd deep within me, soon as this my lord
 Spake words, whose tenor taught me to expect
 That such a race, as ye are, was at hand.
 I am a countrymen of yours, who still
 Affectionate have utter'd, and have heard
 Your deeds and names renown'd. Leaving the gall,

For the sweet fruit I go, that a sure guide
Hath promised to me. But behoves, that far
As to the center first I downward tend."

"So may long space thy spirit guide thy limbs,"
He answer straight return'd; "and so thy fame
Shine bright when thou art gone, as thou shalt tell,
If courtesy and valor, as they wont,
Dwell in our city, or have vanish'd clean:
For one amidst us late condemn'd to wail,
Borsiere, yonder walking with his peers,
Grieves us no little by the news he brings."

"An upstart multitude and sudden gains,
Pride and excess, O Florence! have in thee
Engender'd, so that now in tears thou mourn'st!"

Thus cried I, with my face uprais'd, and they
All three, who for an answer took my words,
Look'd at each other, as men look when truth
Comes to their ear. "If at so little cost,"
They all at once rejoin'd, "thou satisfy
Others who question thee, oh happy thou!
Gifted with words so apt to speak thy thought.
Wherefore, if thou escape this darksome clime,
Returning to behold the radiant stars
When thou with pleasure shalt retrace the past,
See that of us thou speak among mankind."

This said, they broke the circle, and so swift
Fled, that as pinions seem'd their nimble feet.

Not in so short a time might one have said
"Amen," as they had vanish'd. Straight my guide
Pursued his track. I followed: and small space
Had we past onward, when the water's sound
Was now so near at hand, that we had scarce
Heard one another's speech for the loud din.

E'en as the river, that first holds its course
Unmingled from the Mount of Vesulo,
On the left side of Apennine, toward
The east, where Acquacheta higher up

They call, ere it descend into the vale,
 At Forli, by that name no longer known,
 Rebells o'er Saint Benedict, roll'd on
 From the Alpine summit down a precipice,
 Where space enough to lodge a thousand spreads;
 Thus downward from a craggy steep we found
 That this dark wave resounded, roaring loud,
 So that the ear its clamor soon had stunn'd.

I had a cord that braced my girdle round,
 Wherewith I erst had thought fast bound to take
 The painted leopard. This when I had all
 Unloosen'd from me (so my master bade)
 I gather'd up, and stretch'd it forth to him.
 Then to the right he turn'd, and from the brink
 Standing few paces distant, cast it down
 Into the deep abyss. "And somewhat strange,"
 Thus to myself I spake, "signal so strange,"
 Betokens, which my guide with earnest eye
 Thus follows." Ah! what caution must men use
 With those who look not at the deed alone,
 But spy into the thoughts with subtle skill.

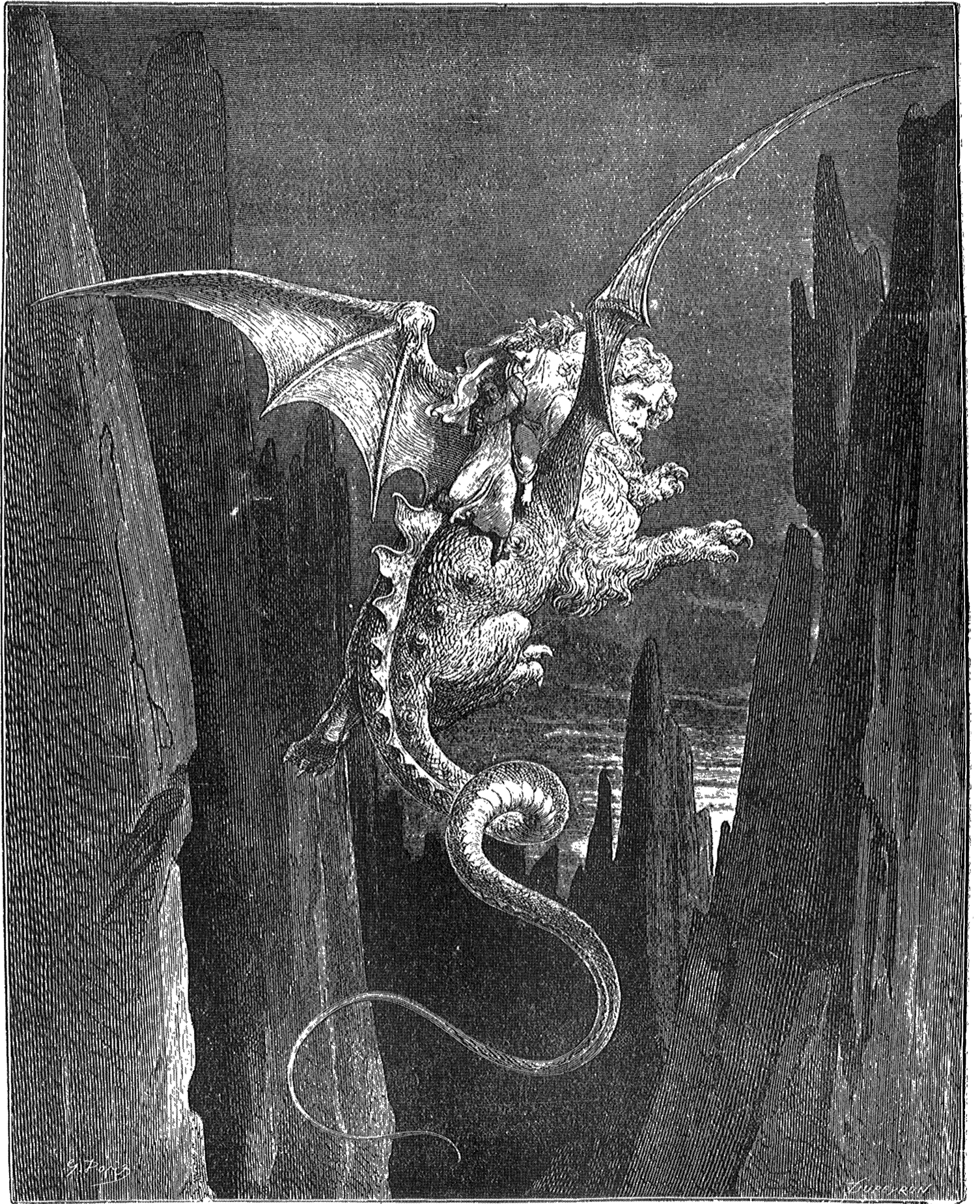
"Quickly shall come," he said, "what I expect:
 Thine eye discover quickly that, whereof
 Thy thought is dreaming." Ever to that truth,
 Which but the semblance of a falsehood wears,
 A man, if possible, should bar his lip;
 Since, although blameless, he incurs reproach.
 But silence here were vain; and by these notes,
 Which now I sing, reader, I swear to thee,
 So may they favor find to latest times!
 That through the gross and murky air I spied
 A shape come swimming up, that might have quell'd
 The stoutest heart with wonder; in such guise
 As one returns, who hath been down to loose
 An anchor grappled fast against some rock,
 Or to aught else that in the salt wave lies,
 Who, upward springing, close draws in his feet.

CANTO XVII.

ARGUMENT.

The monster Geryon is described ; to whom while Virgil is speaking in order that he may carry them both down to the next circle, Dante, by permission, goes a little further along the edge of the void, to descry the third species of sinners contained in this compartment, namely, those who have done violence to Art ; and then returning to his master, they both descend, seated on the back of Geryon.

“L O! the fell monster with the deadly sting,
Who passes mountains, breaks through fenced walls
And firm embattled spears, and with his filth
Taints all the world.” Thus me my guide address’d,
And beckon’d him, that he should come to shore,
Near to the stony causeway’s utmost edge.
Forthwith that image vile of Fraud appear’d,
His head and upper part exposed on land,
But laid not on the shore his bestial train.
His face the semblance of a just man’s wore,
So kind and gracious was its outward cheer ;
The rest was serpent all : two shaggy claws
Reach’d to the arm-pits ; and the back and breast,
And either side, were painted o’er with nodes
And orbits. Colors variegated more
Nor Turks nor Tartars e’er on cloth of state
With interchangeable embroidery wove,
Nor spread Arachne o’er her curious loom.
As oft-times a light skiff, moor’d to the shore,
Stands part in water, part upon the land ;
Or, as where dwells the greedy German boor,
The beaver settles, watching for his prey ;
So on the rim, that fenced the sand with rock,
Sat perch’d the fiend of evil. In the void
Glancing, his tail upturned its venomous fork,



New terror I conceived at the steep plunge.

Canto XVII.. line 117.



Ah! how they made them bound at the first stripe!

Canto XVIII., line 98

With sting like scorpion's arm'd. Then thus my guide:
 "Now need our way must turn few steps apart,
 Far as to that ill beast, who couches there."

Thereat, toward the right our downward course
 We shaped, and better to escape the flame
 And burning marle, ten paces on the verge
 Proceeded. Soon as we to him arrive,
 A little further on mine eye beholds
 A tribe of spirits, seated on the sand
 Near to the void. Forthwith my master spake:
 "That to the full thy knowledge may extend
 Of all this round contains, go now, and mark
 The mien these wear: but hold not long discourse.
 Till thou returnest, I with him meantime
 Will parley, that to us he may vouchsafe
 The aid of his strong shoulders." Thus alone,
 Yet forward on the extremity I paced
 Of that seventh circle, where the mournful tribe
 Were seated. At the eyes forth gush'd their pangs.
 Against the vapors and the torrid soil
 Alternately their shifting hands they plied.
 Thus use the dogs in summer still to ply
 Their jaws and feet by turns, when bitten sore
 By gnats or flies, or gadflies swarming round.

Noting the visages of some, who lay
 Beneath the pelting of that dolorous fire,
 One of them all I knew not; but perceived,
 That pendant from his neck each bore a pouch
 With colors and with emblems various mark'd,
 On which it seem'd as if their eye did feed.

And when, amongst them, looking round I came,
 A yellow purse I saw with azure wrought,
 That wore a lion's countenance and port.
 Then, still my sight pursuing its career,
 Another I beheld, than blood more red,
 A goose display of whiter wing than curd.

And one who bore a fat and azure swine
 Pictured on his white scrip, address'd me thus:
 "What dost thou in this deep? Go now and know,
 Since yet thou livest, that my neighbor here
 Vitaliano on my left shall sit.

A Paduan with these Florentines am I.
 Oft-times they thunder in mine ears, exclaiming,
 'Oh! haste that noble knight, he who the pouch
 With the three goats will bring.' This said, he writhed
 The mouth, and loll'd the tongue out, like an ox
 That licks his nostrils. I, lest longer stay
 He ill might brook, who bade me stay not long,
 Backward my steps from those sad spirits turn'd.

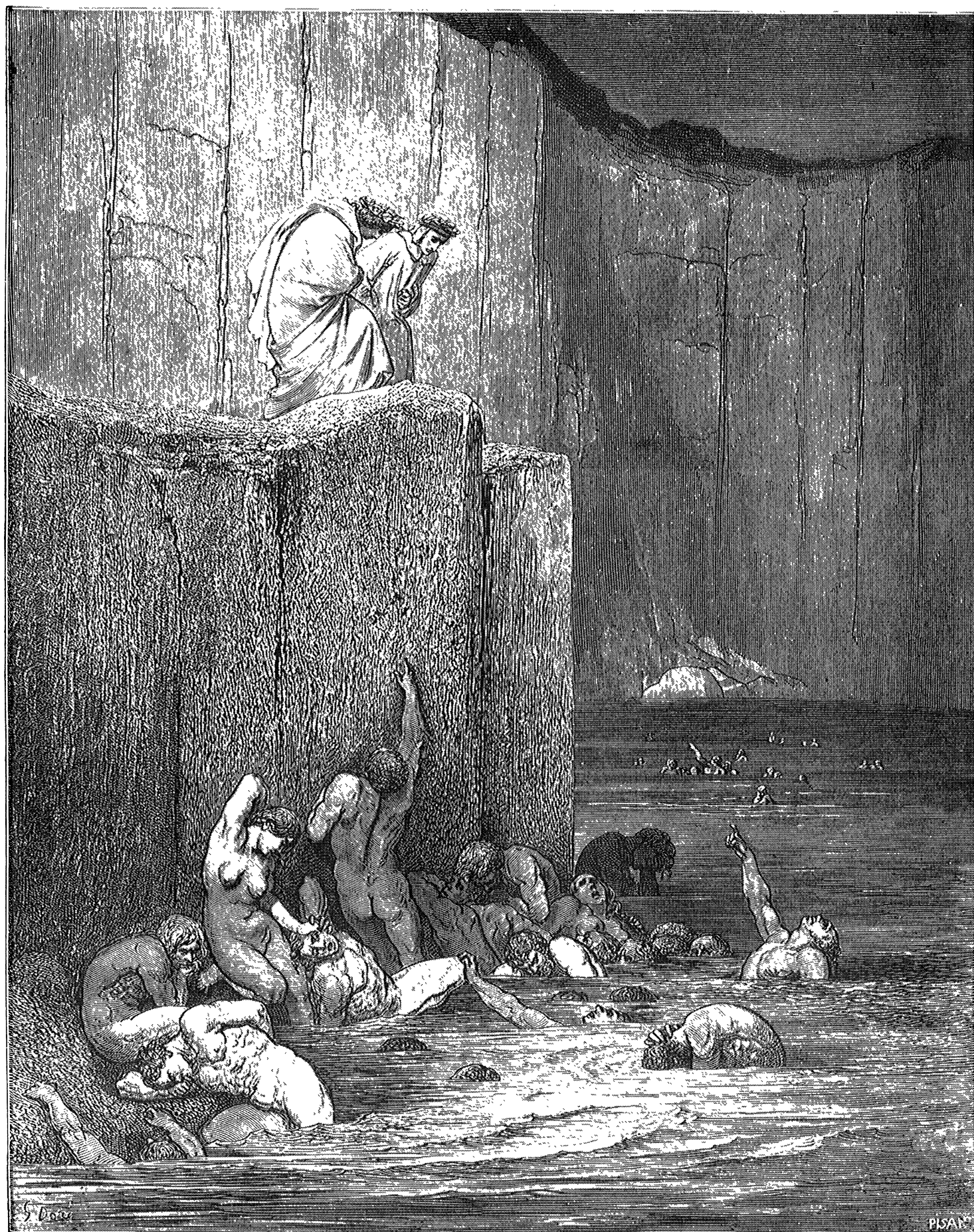
My guide already seated on the haunch
 Of the fierce animal I found; and thus
 He me encouraged. "Be thou stout: be bold.
 Down such a steep flight must we now descend.
 Mount thou before: for, that no power the tail
 May have to harm thee, I will be i' th' midst."

As one, who hath an ague fit so near,
 His nails already are turn'd blue, and he
 Quivers all o'er, if he but eye the shade;
 Such was my cheer at hearing of his words.
 But shame soon interposed her threat, who makes
 The servant bold in presence of his lord.

I settled me upon those shoulders huge,
 And would have said, but that the words to aid
 My purpose came not, "Look thou clasp me firm."

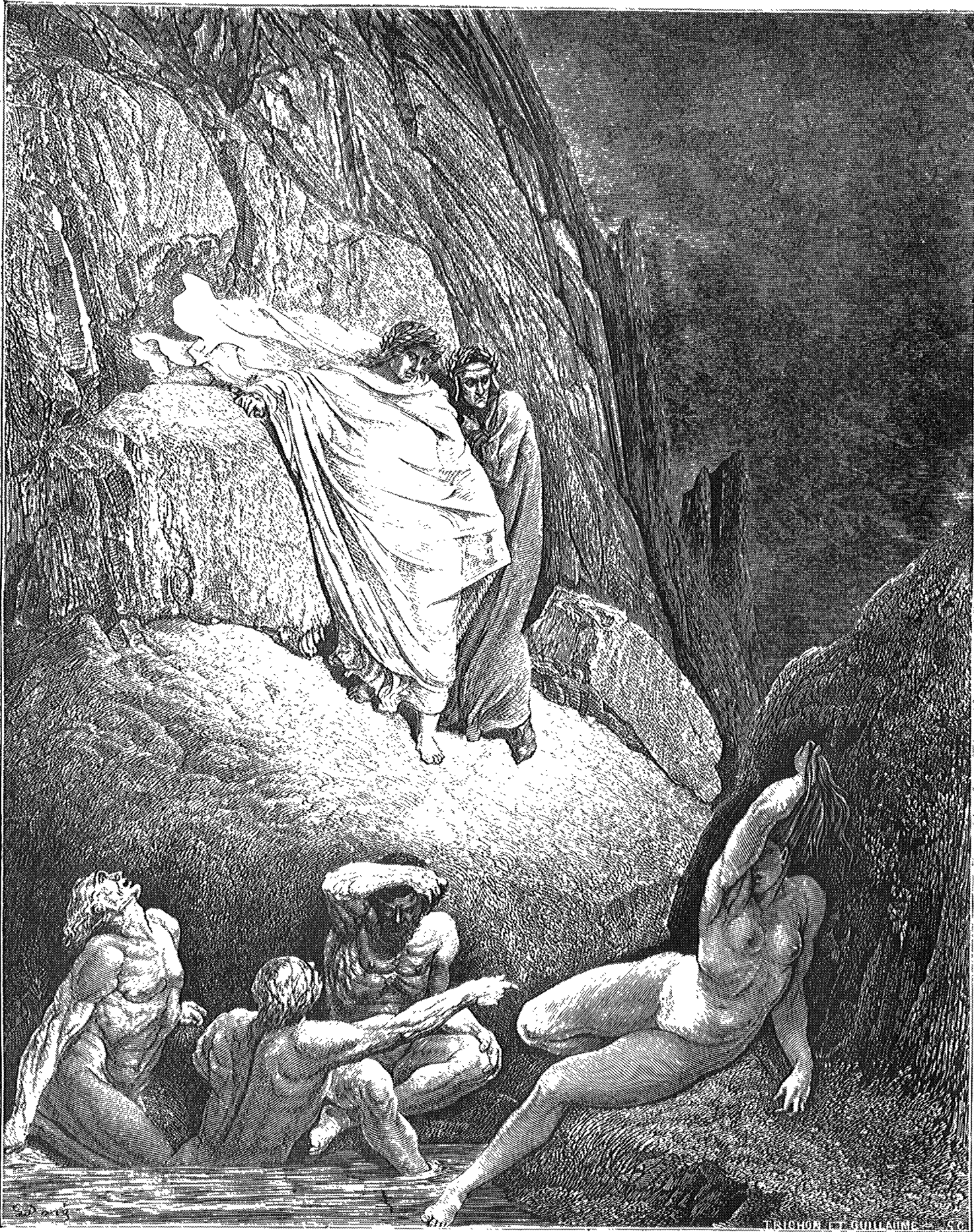
But he whose succor then not first I proved,
 Soon as I mounted, in his arms aloft,
 Embracing, held me up; and thus he spake:
 "Geryon! now move thee: be thy wheeling gyres
 Of ample circuit, easy thy descent.
 Think on the unusual burden thou sustain'st."

As a small vessel, backening out from land,
 Her station quits; so thence the monster loosed,



“ Why greedily thus bendest more on me,
Than on these other filthy ones, thy ken ? ”

Canto XVII., lines 116, 117.



Thais is this, the harlot, whose false lip
Answer'd her doting paramour that ask'd,
"Thankest me much!"

Canto XVIII., lines 130-132.

And, when he felt himself at large, turn'd round
There, where the breast has been, his forked tail.
Thus, like an eel, outstretch'd at length he steer'd,
Gathering the air up with retractile claws.

Not greater was the dread when Phaëton
The reins let drop at random, whence high heaven,
Whereof signs yet appear, was wrapt in flames;
Nor when ill-fated Icarus perceived
By liquefaction of the scalded wax,
The trusted pennons loosen'd from his loins,
His sire exclaiming loud, "Ill way thou keep'st,"
Than was my dread, when round me on each part
The air I view'd, and other object none
Save the fell beast. He, slowly sailing, wheels
His downward motion, unobserved of me,
But that the wind, arising to my face,
Breathes on me from below. Now on our right
I heard the cataract beneath us leap
With hideous crash; whence bending down to explore,
New terror I conceived at the steep plunge;
For flames I saw, and wailings smote mine ear:
So that, all trembling, close I crouch'd my limbs,
And then distinguished, unperceived before,
By the dread torments that on every side
Drew nearer, how our downward course we wound.

As falcon, that hath long been on the wing,
But lure nor bird hath seen, while in despair
The falconer cries, "Ah me! thou stoop'st to earth,"
Wearied descends, whence nimbly he arose
In many an airy wheel, and 'lighting sits
At distance from his lord in angry mood;
So Geryon 'lighting places us on foot
Low down at base of the deep-furrow'd rock,
And of his burden there discharged, forthwith
Sprang forward, like an arrow from the string.

CANTO XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

The poet describes the situation and form of the eighth circle, divided into ten gulfs, which contain as many different descriptions of fraudulent sinners ; but in the present canto he treats only of two sorts : the first is of those who, either for their own pleasure or for that of another, have seduced any woman from her duty ; and these are scourged of demons in the first gulf : the other sort is of flatterers, who in the second gulf are condemned to remain immersed in filth.

THERE is a place within the depths of Hell
Call'd Malebolge, all of rock dark-stain'd
With hue ferruginous, e'en as the steep
That round it circled winds. Right in the midst
Of that abominable region yawns
A spacious gulf profound, whereof the frame
Due time shall tell. The circle, that remains,
Throughout its round, between the gulf and base
Of the high craggy banks, successive forms
Ten bastions, in its hollow bottom raised.

As where, to guard the walls, full many a fosse
Begirds some stately castle, sure defense
Affording to the space within ; so here
Were modell'd these : and as like fortresses,
E'en from their threshold to the brink without,
Are flank'd with bridges ; from the rock's low base
Thus flinty paths advanced, that 'cross the moles
And dikes struck onward far as to the gulf,
That in one bound collected cuts them off.
Such was the place, wherein we found ourselves
From Geryon's back dislodged. The bard to left
Held on his way, and I behind him moved.

On our right hand new misery I saw,
New pains, new executioners of wrath,

That swarming peopled the first chasm. Below
 Were naked sinners. Hitherward they came,
 Meeting our faces, from the middle point;
 With us beyond, but with a larger stride.
 E'en thus the Romans, when the year returns
 Of Jubilee, with better speed to rid
 The thronging multitudes, their means devise
 For such as pass the bridge; that on one side
 All front toward the castle, and approach
 Saint Peter's fane, on the other towards the mount.

Each diverse way, along the grisly rock,
 Horn'd demons I beheld, with lashes huge,
 That on their back unmercifully smote.
 Ah! how they made them bound at the first stripe!
 None for the second waited, nor the third.

Meantime, as on I pass'd, one met my sight,
 Whom soon as view'd, "Of him," cried I, "not yet
 Mine eye hath had his fill." I therefore stay'd
 My feet to scan him, and the teacher kind
 Paused with me, and consented I should walk
 Backward a space; and the tormented spirit,
 Who thought to hide him, bent his visage down.
 But it avail'd him nought; for I exclaim'd:
 "Thou who doth cast thine eye upon the ground,
 Unless thy features do belie thee much,
 Venedico art thou, But what brings thee
 Into this bitter seasoning?" He replied:
 "Unwillingly I answer to thy words.
 But thy clear speech, that to my mind recalls
 The world I once inhabited, constrains me.
 Know then 'twas I who led fair Ghisola
 To do the Marquis' will, however fame
 The shameful tale have bruited. Nor alone
 Bologna hither sendeth me to mourn.
 Rather with us the place is so o'erthrong'd,
 That not so many tongues this day are taught,

Betwixt the Reno and Savena's stream,
 To answer Sipa in their country's phrase.
 And if of that securer proof thou need,
 Remember but our craving thirst for gold."

Him speaking thus, a demon with his thong
 Struck, and exclaim'd, "Away, corrupter! here
 Women are none for sale." Forthwith I join'd
 My escort, and few paces thence we came
 To where a rock forth issued from the bank.
 That easily ascended, to the right
 Upon its splinter turning, we depart
 From those eternal barriers. When arrived
 Where, underneath, the gaping arch lets pass
 The scourged souls. "Pause here," the teacher said,
 "And let those others miserable now
 Strike on thy ken; faces not yet beheld,
 For that together they with us have walk'd."

From the old bridge we eyed the pack, who came
 From the other side toward us, like the rest,
 Excoriate from the lash. My gentle guide,
 By me unquestion'd, thus his speech resumed:
 "Behold that lofty shade, who this way tends,
 And seems too woe-begone to drop a tear.
 How yet the regal aspect he retains!
 Jason is he, whose skill and prowess won
 The ram from Colchos. To the Lemnian isle
 His passage thither led him, when those bold
 And pitiless women had slain all their males.
 There he with tokens and fair witching words
 Hypsipylé beguiled, a virgin young,
 Who first had all the rest herself beguiled.
 Impregnated, he left her there forlorn.
 Such is the guilt condemns him to this pain.
 Here too Medea's injuries are avenged.
 All bear him company, who like deceit
 To his have practised. And thus much to know

Of the first vale suffice thee, and of those
Whom its keen torments urge." Now had we come
Where, crossing the next pier, the straiten'd path
Bestrides its shoulders to another arch.

Hence, in the second chasm we heard the ghosts,
Who gibber in low melancholy sounds,
With wide-stretch'd nostrils snort, and on themselves
Smite with their palms. Upon the banks a scurf,
From the foul steam condensed, encrusting hung,
That held sharp combat with the sight and smell.

So hollow is the depth, that from no part,
Save on the summit of the rocky span,
Could I distinguish aught. Thus far we came;
And thence I saw, within the fosse below,
A crowd immersed in ordure, that appear'd
Druff of the human body. There beneath
Searching with eye inquisitive, I mark'd
One with his head so grimed, 'twere hard to deem
If he were clerk or layman. Loud he cried:
"Why greedily thus bendest more on me,
Than on these other filthy ones, thy ken?"

"Because, if true my memory," I replied,
"I heretofore have seen thee with dry locks;
And thou Alessio art, of Lucca sprung.
Therefore than all the rest I scan thee more."

Then beating on his brain, these words he spake:
"Me thus low down my flatteries have sunk,
Wherewith I ne'er enough could glut my tongue."

My leader thus: "A little further stretch
Thy face, that thou the visage well mayst note
Of that besotted, sluttish courtesan,
Who there doth rend her with defiled nails,
Now crouching down, now risen on her feet.
Thais is this, the harlot, whose false lip
Answer'd her doting paramour that ask'd,
'Thankest me much!' — 'Say rather, wondrously,'
And, seeing this, here satiate be our view."

CANTO XIX.

ARGUMENT.

They come to the third gulf, wherein are punished those who have been guilty of simony. These are fixed with the head downwards in certain apertures, so that no more of them than the legs appears without, and on the soles of their feet are seen burning flames. Dante is taken down by his guide into the bottom of the gulf; and there finds Pope Nicholas V., whose evil deeds, together with those of other pontiffs, are bitterly reprehended. Virgil then carries him up again to the arch, which affords them a passage over the following gulf.

WOE to thee, Simon Magus! woe to you,
His wretched followers! who the things of God,
Which should be wedded unto goodness, them,
Rapacious as ye are, do prostitute
For gold and silver in adultery.
Now must the trumpet sound for you, since yours
Is the third chasm. Upon the following vault
We now had mounted, where the rock impends
Directly o'er the center of the fosse.

Wisdom Supreme! how wonderful the art,
Which thou dost manifest in heaven, in earth,
And in the evil world, how just a meed
Allotting by thy virtue unto all.

I saw the livid stone, throughout the sides
And in its bottom full of apertures,
All equal in their width, and circular each.
Nor ample less nor larger they appear'd
Than in Saint John's fair dome of me beloved,
Those framed to hold the pure baptismal streams,
One of the which I brake, some few years past,
To save a whelming infant: and be this
A seal to undeceive whoever doubts
The motive of my deed. From out the mouth
Of every one emerged a sinner's feet,

And of the legs high upward as the calf.
 The rest beneath was hid. On either foot
 The soles were burning; whence the flexile joints
 Glanced with such violent motion, as had snapt
 Asunder cords or twisted withes. As flame,
 Feeding on unctuous matter, glides along
 The surface, scarcely touching where it moves;
 So here, from heel to point, glided the flames.

“Master! say who is he, than all the rest
 Glancing in fiercer agony, on whom
 A ruddier flame doth prey?” I thus inquired.

“If thou be willing,” he replied, “that I
 Carry thee down, where least the slope bank falls,
 He of himself shall tell thee, and his wrongs.”

I then: “As pleases thee, to me is best.
 Thou art my lord; and know’st that ne’er I quit
 Thy will: what silence hides, that knowest thou.”

Thereat on the fourth pier we came, we turn’d,
 And on our left descended to the depth,
 A narrow strait, and perforated close.
 Nor from his side my leader set me down,
 Till to his orifice he brought, whose limb
 Quivering express’d his pang. “Whoe’er thou art,
 Sad spirit! thus reversed, and as a stake
 Driven in the soil,” I in these words began;
 “If thou be able, utter forth thy voice.”

There stood I like the friar, that doth shrive
 A wretch for murder doom’d, who, e’en when fix’d,
 Calleth him back, whence death awhile delays.

He shouted: “Ha! already standest there?
 Already standest there, O Boniface!
 By many a year the writing play’d me false.
 So early dost thou surfeit with the wealth,
 For which thou fearest not in guile to take
 The lovely lady, and then mangle her?”

I felt as those who, piercing not the drift
 Of answer made them, stand as if exposed

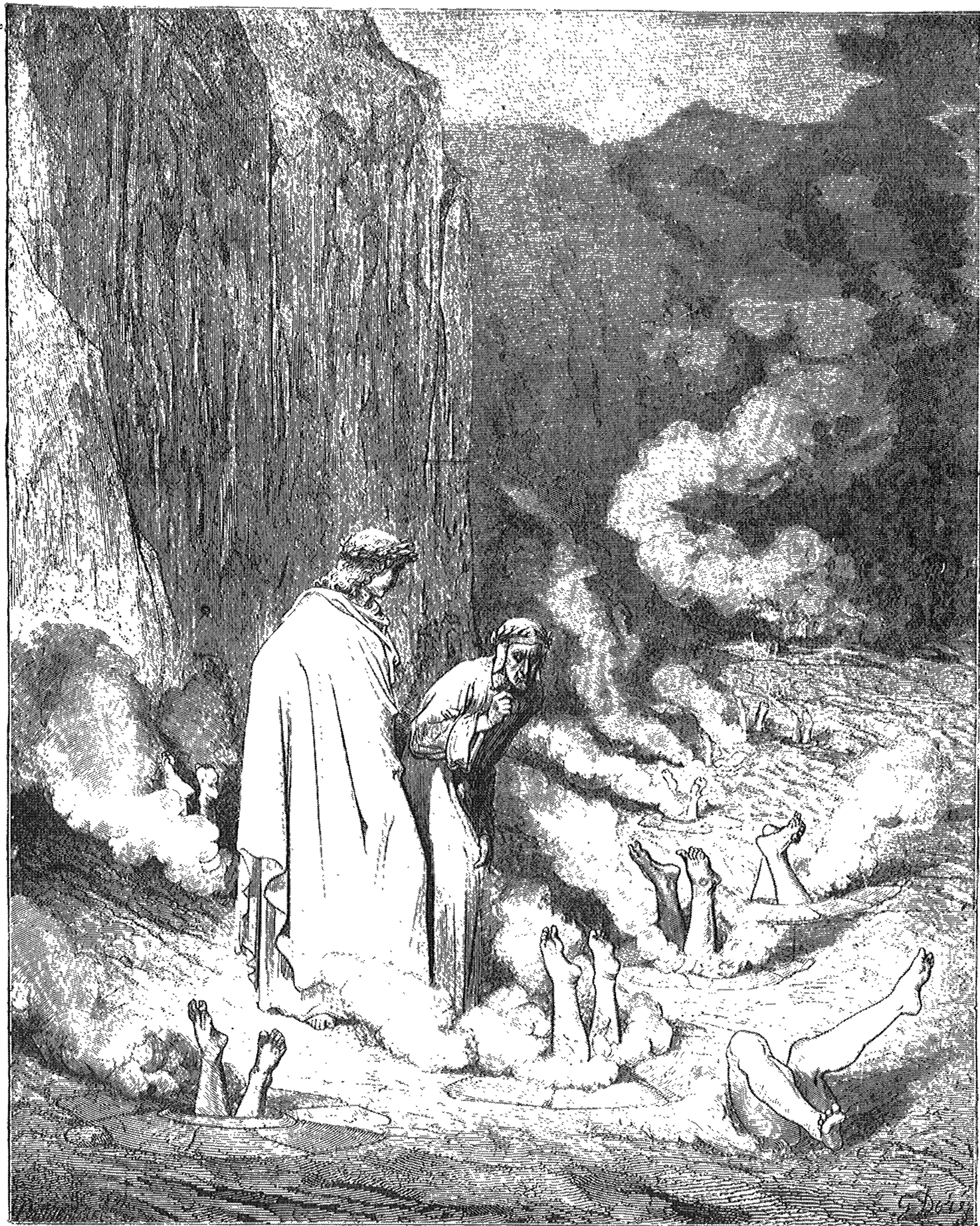
In mockery, nor knowing what to reply ;
 When Virgil thus admonish'd : " Tell him quick,
 ' I am not he, not he whom thou believest,' "

And I, as was enjoin'd me, straight replied.

That heard, the spirit all did wrench his feet,
 And, sighing, next in woful accent spake :

" What then of me requir'st ? If to know
 So much imports thee, who I am, that thou
 Hast therefore down the bank descended, learn
 That in the mighty mantle I was robed,
 And of a she-bear was indeed the son,
 So eager to advance my whelps, that there
 My having in my purse above I stow'd,
 And here myself. Under my head are dragg'd
 The rest, my predecessors in the guilt
 Of simony. Stretch'd at their length, they lie
 Along an opening in the rock. ' Midst them
 I also low shall fall, soon as he comes,
 For whom I took thee, when so hastily
 I question'd. But already longer time
 Hath past, since my soles kindled, and I thus
 Upturn'd have stood, than is his doom to stand
 Planted with fiery feet. For after him
 One yet of deeds more ugly shall arrive,
 From forth the west, a shepherd without law,
 Fated to cover both his form and mine.
 He a new Jason shall be call'd, of whom
 In Maccabees we read ; and favor such
 As to that priest his king indulgent show'd,
 Shall be of France's monarch shown to him. "

I know not if I here too far presumed,
 But in this strain I answer'd : " Tell me now
 What treasures from Saint Peter at the first
 Our Lord demanded, when he put the keys
 Into his charge ? Surely he asked no more
 But ' Follow me ! ' Nor Peter, nor the rest,
 Or gold or silver from Matthias took,



There stood I like the friar that doth shrive
A wretch for murder doom'd.

Canto XIX., lines 51, 52.



This said,
They grappled him with more than hundred hooks.

Canto XXXI, lines 50, 51.

When lots were cast upon the forfeit place
 Of the condemned soul. Abide thou then;
 Thy punishment of right is merited:
 And look thou well to that ill-gotten coin,
 Which against Charles thy hardihood inspired.
 If reverence of the keys restrain'd me not,
 Which thou in happier time didst hold, I yet
 Severer speech might use. Your avarice
 O'ercasts the world with mourning, under foot
 Treading the good, and raising bad men up,
 Of shepherds like to you, the Evangelist
 Was ware, when her, who sits upon the waves,
 With kings in filthy whoredom he beheld;
 She who with seven heads tower'd at her birth,
 And from ten horns her proof of glory drew,
 Long as her spouse in virtue took delight.
 Of gold and silver ye have made your god,
 Differing wherein from the idolater,
 But that he worships one, a hundred ye?
 Ah, Constantine! to how much ill gave birth,
 Not thy conversation, but that plenteous dower,
 Which the first wealthy Father gain'd from thee."

Meanwhile, as thus I sung, he, whether wrath
 Or conscience smote him, violent upsprang
 Spinning on either sole. I do believe
 My teacher well was pleased, with so composed
 A lip he listen'd ever to the sound
 Of the true words I utter'd. In both arms
 He caught, and to his bosom lifting me,
 Upward retraced the way of his descent.

Nor weary of his weight, he press'd me close
 Till to the summit of the rock we came,
 Our passage from the fourth to the fifth pier.
 His cherish'd burden there gently he placed
 Upon the rugged rock and steep, a path
 Not easy for the clambering goat to mount.

Thence to my view another vale appear'd.

CANTO XX.

ARGUMENT.

The poet relates the punishment of such as presumed, while living, to predict future events. It is to have their faces reversed and set the contrary way on their limbs, so that, being deprived of the power to see before them, they are constrained ever to walk backwards. Among these Virgil points out to him Amphiaræus, Tiresias, Aruns, and Manto (from the mention of whom he takes occasion to speak of the origin of Mantua), together with several others, who had practised the arts of divination and astrology.

AND now the verse proceeds to torments new,
Fit argument of this the twentieth strain
Of the first song, whose awful theme records
The spirits whelm'd in woe. Earnest I look'd
Into the depth, that open'd to my view,
Moisten'd with tear and anguish, and beheld
A tribe, that came along the hollow vale,
In silence weeping: such their step as walk
Quires, chanting solemn litanies, on earth.

As on them more direct mine eye descends,
Each wondrously seem'd to be reversed
At the neck-bone, so that the countenance
Was from the reins averted; and because
None might before him look, they were compell'd
To advance with backward gait. Thus one perhaps
Hath been by force of palsy clean transposed,
But I ne'er saw it nor believe it so.

Now, reader! think within thyself, so God
Fruit of thy reading give thee! how I long
Could keep my visage dry, when I beheld
Near me our form distorted in such guise,
That on the hinder parts fallen from the face
The tears down-streaming roll'd. Against a rock
I leant and wept, so that my guide exclaim'd,

“What! and art thou, too, witless as the rest?
 Here pity most doth show herself alive,
 When she is dead. What guilt exceedeth his,
 Who with Heaven’s judgment in his passion strives?
 Raise up thy head, raise up, and see the man
 Before whose eyes earth gaped in Thebes when all
 Cried out ‘Amphiaräus, whither rushest?
 Why leavest thou the war?’ He not the less
 Fell ruining far as to Minos down,
 Whose grapple none eludes. Lo! how he makes
 The breast his shoulders; and who once too far
 Before him wish’d to see, now backward looks
 And treads reverse his path. Tiresias note,
 Who semblance changed, when woman he became
 Of male, through every limb transform’d; and then
 Once more behoved him with his rod to strike
 The two entwining serpents, ere the plumes,
 That mark’d the better sex, might shoot again.

“Aruns, with rere his belly facing, comes.
 On Luni’s mountains ’midst the marbles white,
 Where delves Carrara’s hind, who wons beneath,
 A cavern was his dwelling, whence the stars
 And main sea wide in boundless view he held.

“The next, whose loosen’d tresses overspread
 Her bosom, which thou seest not (for each hair
 On that side grows) was Manto, she who search’d
 Through many regions, and at length her seat
 Fix’d in my native land: whence a short space
 My words detain thy audience. When her sire
 From life departed, and in servitude
 The city dedicate to Bacchus mourn’d,
 Long time she went a wanderer through the world.
 Aloft in Italy’s delightful land
 A lake there lies, at foot of that proud Alp
 That o’er the Tyrol locks Germania in,
 Its name Benacus, from whose ample breast

A thousand springs, methinks, and more, between
Camonica and Garda, issuing forth,
Water the Apennine. There is a spot
At midway of that lake, where he who bears
Of Trento's flock the pastoral staff, with him
Of Brescia, and the Veronese, might each
Passing that way his benediction give.
A garrison of goodly site and strong
Peschiera stands, to awe with front opposed
The Bergamese and Brescian, whence the shore
More slope each way descends. There, whatso'er
Benacus' bosom holds not, tumbling o'er
Down falls, and winds a river flood beneath
Through the green pastures. Soon as in his course
The stream makes head, Benacus then no more
They call the name, but Mincius, till at last
Reaching Governo, into Po he falls.
Not far his course hath run, when a wide flat
It finds, which overstretching as a marsh
It covers, pestilent in summer oft.
Hence journeying, the savage maiden saw
Midst of the fen a territory waste
And naked of inhabitants. To shun
All human converse, here she with her slaves,
Plying her arts, remain'd, and liv'd, and left
Her body tenantless. Thenceforth the tribes,
Who round were scatter'd, gathering to that place,
Assembled; for its strength was great, enclosed
On all parts by the fen. On those dead bones
They rear'd themselves a city, for her sake
Calling it Mantua, who first chose the spot,
Nor ask'd another omen for the name;
Wherein more numerous the people dwelt,
Ere Casalodi's madness by deceit
Was wrong'd of Pinamonte. If thou hear
Henceforth another origin assign'd

Of that my country, I forewarn thee now,
That falsehood none beguile thee of the truth."

I answer'd, "Teacher, I conclude thy words
So certain, that all else shall be to me
As embers lacking life. But now of these,
Who here proceed, instruct me, if thou see
Any that merit more especial note.
For thereon is my mind alone intent."

He straight replied: "That spirit from whose cheek
The beard sweeps o'er his shoulders brown, what time
Græcia was emptied of her males, that scarce
The cradles were supplied, the seer was he
In Aulis, who with Calchas gave the sign
When first to cut the cable. Him they named
Eurypilus: so sings my magic strain,
In which majestic measure well thou know'st,
Who know'st it all. That other, round the loins
So slender of his shape, was Michael Scot,
Practiced in every slight of magic wile.

"Guido Bonatti see: Asdente mark,
Who now were willing he had tended still
The thread and cordwain, and too late repents.

"See next the wretches, who the needle left,
The shuttle and the spindle, and became
Diviners: baneful witcheries they wrought
With images and herbs. But onward now:
For now doth Cain with fork of thorns confine
On either hemisphere, touching the wave
Beneath the towers of Seville. Yesternight
The moon was round. Thou mayst remember well:
For she good service did thee in the gloom
Of the deep wood." This said, both onward moved.

CANTO XXI.

ARGUMENT.

Still in the eighth circle, which bears the name of Malebolge, they look down from the bridge that passes over its fifth gulf, upon the barterers or public peculators. These are plunged in a lake of boiling pitch, and guarded by demons, to whom Virgil, leaving Dante apart, presents himself; and license being obtained to pass onward, both pursue their way.

THUS we from bridge to bridge, with other talk,
The which my drama cares not to rehearse,
Pass'd on; and to the summit reaching, stood
To view another gap, within the round
Of Malebolge, other bootless pangs.

Marvelous darkness shadow'd o'er the place.

In the Venetians' arsenal as boils
Through wintry months tenacious pitch, to smear
Their unsound vessels; for the inclement time
Seafaring men restrains, and in that while
His barque one builds anew, another stops
The ribs of his that hath made many a voyage,
One hammers at the prow, one at the poop,
This shapeth oars, that other cables twirls,
The mizen one repairs, and mainsail rent;
So, not by force of fire but art divine,
Boil'd here a glutinous thick mass, that round
Limed all the shore beneath. I that beheld,
But therein nought distinguish'd, save the bubbles
Raised by the boiling, and one mighty swell
Heave, and by turns subsiding fall. While there
I fix'd my ken below, "Mark! mark!" my guide
Exclaiming, drew me towards him from the place

Wherein I stood. I turn'd myself, as one
 Impatient to behold that which beheld
 He needs must shun, whom sudden fear unmans,
 That he in flight delays not for the view.
 Behind me I discern'd a devil black,
 That running up advanced along the rock.
 Ah! what fierce cruelty his look bespake,
 In act how bitter did he seem, with wings
 Buoyant outstretch'd and feet of nimblest tread.
 His shoulder, proudly eminent and sharp,
 Was with a sinner charged: by either haunch
 He held him, the foot's sinew griping fast.

“Ye of our bridge!” he cried, “keen-talon'd fiends!
 Lo! one of Santa Zita's elders. Him
 Whelm ye beneath, while I return for more.
 That land hath store of such. All men are there,
 Except Bonturo, barterers; of 'no'
 For lucre there an 'ay' is quickly made.”

Him dashing down, o'er the rough rock he turn'd
 Nor ever after thief a master loosed
 Sped with like eager haste. The other sank,
 And forthwith writhing to the surface rose.
 But those dark demons, shrouded by the bridge,
 Cried; “Here the hallow'd visage saves not: here
 Is other swimming than in Serchio's wave,
 Wherefore, if thou desire we rend thee not,
 Take heed thou mount not o'er the pitch.” This said,
 They grappled him with more than hundred hooks,
 And shouted, “Cover'd thou must sport thee here;
 So, if thou canst, in secret mayst thou filch.”
 E'en thus the 'cook bestirs him, with his grooms,
 To thrust the flesh into the caldron down
 With flesh-hooks, that it float not on the top.

Me then my guide bespake: “Lest they descry
 That thou art here, behind a craggy rock
 Bend low and screen thee: and whate'er of force

Be offer'd me, or insult, fear thou not;
 For I am well advised, who have been erst
 In the like fray." Beyond the bridge's head
 Therewith he pass'd; and reaching the sixth pier,
 Behoved him then a forehead terror-proof.

With storm and fury, as when dogs rush forth
 Upon the poor man's back, who suddenly
 From whence he standeth makes his suit; so rush'd
 Those from beneath the arch, and against him
 Their weapons all they pointed. He, aloud:
 "Be none of you outrageous: ere your time
 Dare seize me, come forth from amongst you one,
 Who having heard my words, decide he then
 If he shall tear these limbs." They shouted loud
 "Go, Malacoda!" Whereat one advanced,
 The others standing firm, and as he came,
 "What may this turn avail him?" he exclaim'd.

"Believest thou, Malacoda! I had come
 Thus far from all your skirmishing secure,"
 My teacher answer'd, "without will divine
 And destiny propitious? Pass we then;
 For so Heaven's pleasure is, that I should lead
 Another through this savage wilderness."

Forthwith so fell his pride, that he let drop
 The instrument of torture at his feet,
 And to the rest exclaim'd, "We have no power
 To strike him." Then to my guide: "Oh, thou!
 Who on the bridge among the crags dost sit
 Low crouching, safely now to me return."

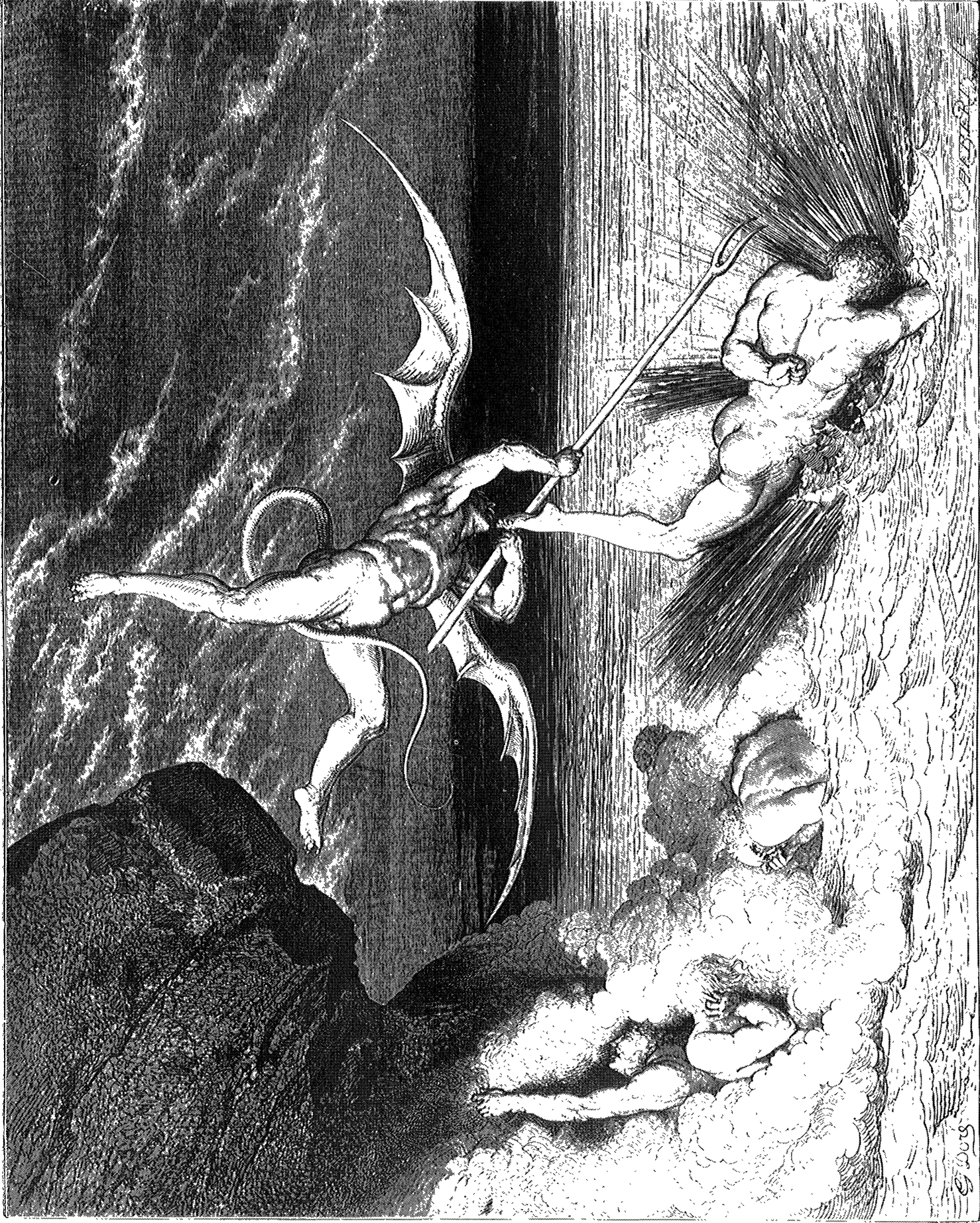
I rose, and towards him moved with speed; the fiends
 Meantime all forward drew: me terror seized,
 Lest they should break the compact they had made.
 Thus issuing from Caprona, once I saw
 The infantry, dreading lest his covenant
 The foe should break; so close he hemmed them round.

I to my leader's side adhered, mine eyes



Be none of you outrageous.

Canto XXI., line 70.



In pursuit

He therefore sped, exclaiming, "Thou art caught."

Canto XXVII lines 102-106

With fixed and motionless observance bent
 On their unkindly visage. They, their hooks
 Protruding, one the other thus bespake:
 "Wilt thou I touch him on the hip?" To whom
 Was answer'd, "Even so; nor miss thy aim."

But he who was in conference with my guide,
 Turn'd rapid round; and thus the demon spake:
 "Stay, stay thee, Scarmiglione!" Then to us
 He added: "Further footing to your step
 This rock affords not, shiver'd to the base
 Of the sixth arch. But would ye still proceed,
 Up by this cavern go: not distant far,
 Another rock will yield you passage safe.
 Yesterday, later by five hours than now,
 Twelve hundred threescore years and six had fill'd
 The circuit of their course, since here the way
 Was broken. Thitherward I straight dispatch
 Certain of these my scouts, who shall espy
 If any on the surface bask. With them
 Go ye; for ye shall find them nothing fell.
 Come Alichino, forth," with that he cried,
 "And Calcabrina, and Cagnazzo thou!
 The troop of ten let Barbariccia lead.
 With Libicocco, Draghinazzo haste,
 Fang'd Ciriatto, Graffiacane fierce,
 And Farfarello, and mad Rubicant.
 Search ye around the bubbling tar. For these
 In safety lead them, where the other crag
 Uninterrupted traverses the dens."

I then: "Oh, master! what a sight is there.
 Ah! without escort, journey we alone,
 Which, if thou know the way, I covet not.
 Unless thy prudence fail thee, dost not mark
 How they do gnarl upon us, and their scowl
 Threatens us present tortures?" He replied:
 "I charge thee, fear not: let them, as they will,

Gnarl on: 'tis but in token of their spite
Against the souls who mourn in torment steep'd."
To leftward o'er the pier they turn'd; but each
Had first between his teeth prest close the tongue,
Toward their leader for a signal looking,
Which he with sound obscene triumphant gave.

CANTO XXII.

ARGUMENT.

Virgil and Dante proceed, accompanied by the demons, and see other sinners of the same description in the same gulf. The device of Ciampolo, one of these, to escape from the demons, who had laid hold on him.

IT hath been heretofore my chance to see
Horsemen with martial order shifting camp,
To onset sallying, or in muster ranged,
Or in retreat sometimes outstretch'd for flight:
Light-armed squadrons and fleet foragers
Scouring thy plains, Arezzo! have I seen
And clashing tournaments, and tilting jousts,
Now with the sound of trumpets, now of bells,
Tabors, or signals made from castled heights,
And with inventions multiform, our own,
Or introduced from foreign land; but ne'er
To such a strange recorder I beheld,
In evolution moving, horse nor foot,
Nor ship, that tack'd by sign from land or star.

With the ten demons on our way we went;
Ah, fearful company! but in the church
With saints, with gluttons at the tavern's mess.

Still earnest on the pitch I gazed, to mark
All things whate'er the chasm contain'd, and those
Who burn'd within. As dolphins that, in sign
To mariners, heave high their arched backs,
That thence forewarn'd they may advise to save
Their threaten'd vessel; so, at intervals,
To ease the pain, his back some sinner show'd,
Then hid more nimbly than the lightning-glance.

E'en as the frogs, that of a watery moat

Stand at the brink, with the jaws only out,
 Their feet and of the trunk all else conceal'd,
 Thus on each part the sinners stood; but soon
 As Barbariccia was at hand, so they
 Drew bach under the wave. I saw, and yet
 My heart doth stagger, one, that waited thus,
 As it befalls that oft one frog remains,
 While the next springs away: and Graffiacan,
 Who of the fiends was nearest, grappling seized
 His clotted locks, and dragg'd him sprawling up,
 That he appear'd to me an otter. Each
 Already by their names I knew, so well.
 When they were chosen I observed, and mark'd
 How one the other call'd. "O Rubicant!
 See that his hide thou with thy talons flay,"
 Shouted together all the cursed crew.

Then I: "Inform thee, master! if thou may,
 What wretched soul is this, on whom their hands
 His foes have laid." My leader to his side
 Approach'd, and whence he came inquired; to whom
 Was answer'd thus: "Born in Navarre's domain,
 My mother placed me in a lord's retinue;
 For she had borne me to a losel vile,
 A spendthrift of his substance and himself.
 The good king Thibault after that I served:
 To peculating here my thoughts were turn'd,
 Whereof I give account in this dire heat."

Straight Ciriatto, from whose mouth a tusk
 Issued on either side, as from a boar,
 Ripp'd him with one of these. 'Twixt evil claws
 The mouse had fallen: but Barbariccia cried,
 Seizing him with both arms: "Stand thou apart,
 While I do fix him on my prong transpierced."
 Then added, turning to my guide his face,
 "Inquire of him if more thou wish to learn
 Ere he again be rent." My leader thus:

“Then tell us of the partners of thy guilt;
 Knowest thou any sprung of Latian land
 Under the tar?” “I parted,” he replied,
 “But now from one, who sojourn’d not far thence;
 So were I under shelter now with him,
 Nor hook nor talon then should scare me more.”

“Too long we suffer,” Libicocco cried;
 Then, darting forth a prong, seized on his arm,
 And mangled bore away the sinewy part.
 Him Draghinazzo by his thighs beneath
 Would next have caught; whence angrily their chief,
 Turning on all sides round, with threatening brow
 Restrain’d them. When their strife a little ceased,
 Of him, who yet was gazing on his wound,
 My teacher thus without delay inquired:

“Who was the spirit, from whom by evil hap
 Parting, as thou hast told, thou camest to shore?”

“It was the fair Gomita,” he rejoin’d,
 “He of Gallura, vessel of all guile,
 Who had his master’s enemies in hand,
 And used them so that they commend him well.
 Money he took, and them at large dismiss’d;
 So he reports; and in each other charge
 Committed to his keeping play’d the part
 Of barterer to the height. With him doth herd
 The chief of Logodoro, Michael Zanche.
 Sardinia is a theme whereof their tongue
 Is never weary. Out! alas! behold
 That other, how he grins. More would I say,
 But tremble lest he mean to maul me sore.”

Their captain then to Farfarello turning,
 Who roll’d his moony eyes in act to strike,
 Rebuked him thus: “Off, cursed bird! avaunt!”

“If ye desire to see or hear,” he thus
 Quaking with dread resumed, “or Tuscan spirits
 Or Lombard, I will cause them to appear.

Meantime, let these ill talons bate their fury,
 So that no vengeance they may fear from them,
 And I, remaining in this self-same place,
 Will, for myself but one, make seven appear,
 When my shrill whistle shall be heard: for so
 Our custom is to call each other up."

Cagnazzo at that word deriding grinn'd,
 Then wagg'd the head and spake: "Hear his device,
 Mischievous as he is, to plunge him down."

Whereto he thus, who fail'd not in rich store
 Of nice-wove toils: "Mischief, forsooth, extreme!
 Meant only to procure myself more woe."

No longer Alichino then refrain'd,
 But thus, the rest gainsaying, him bespake:
 "If thou do cast thee down, I not on foot
 Will chase thee, but above the pitch will beat
 My plumes. Quit we the vantage ground, and let
 The bank be as a shield; that we may see,
 If singly thou prevail against us all."

Now, reader, of new sport expect to hear.

They each one turn'd his eyes to the other shore,
 He first, who was the hardest to persuade.
 The spirit of Navarre chose well his time,
 Planted his feet on land, and at one leap
 Escaping, disappointed their resolve.

Them quick resentment stung, but him the most
 Who was the cause of failure: in pursuit
 He therefore sped, exclaiming, "Thou art caught."

But little it avail'd; terror outstripp'd
 His following flight; the other plunged beneath,
 And he with upward pinion raised his breast:
 E'en thus the water-fowl, when she perceives
 The falcon near, dives instant down, while he
 Enraged and spent retires. That mockery
 In Calcabrina fury stirr'd, who flew
 After him, with desire of strife inflamed;

And, for the barterer had 'scaped, so turn'd
His talons on his comrade. · O'er the dyke
In grapple close they join'd; but the other proved
A goshawk able to rend well his foe;
And in the boiling lake both fell. The heat
Was umpire soon between them; but in vain
To lift themselves they strove, so fast were glued
Their pennons. Barbariccia, as the rest,
That chance lamenting, four in flight dispatch'd
From the other coast, with all their weapons arm'd.
They to their post on each side speedily
Descending, stretch'd their hooks toward the fiends,
Who flounder'd, inly burning from their scars:
And we departing left them to that broil.

CANTO XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

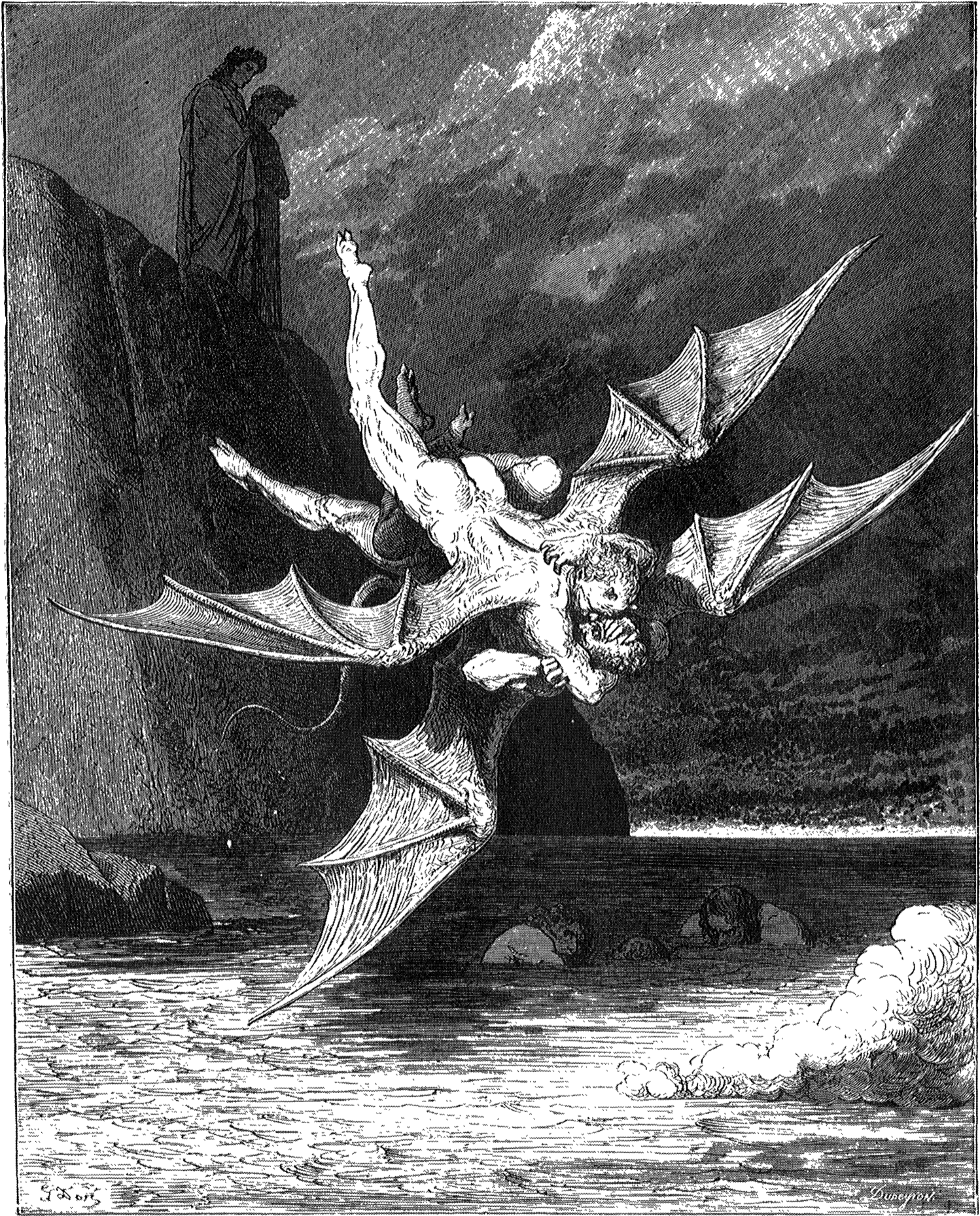
The enraged demons pursue Dante, but he is preserved from them by Virgil. On reaching the sixth gulf, he beholds the punishment of the hypocrites; which is, to pace continually round the gulf under the pressure of caps and hoods that are gilt on the outside, but leaden within. He is addressed by two of these, Catalano and Loderingo, knights of Saint Mary, otherwise called Joyous Friars of Bologna. Caiaphas is seen fixed to a cross on the ground, and lies so stretched along the way, that all tread on him in passing.

IN silence and in solitude we went,
One first, the other following his steps,
As minor friars journeying on their road.

The present fray had turn'd my thoughts to muse
Upon old Æsop's fable, where he told
What fate unto the mouse and frog befell;
For language hath not sounds more like in sense,
Than are these chances, if the origin
And end of each be heedfully compared.
And as one thought bursts from another forth,
So afterward from that another sprang,
Which added doubly to my former fear.
For thus I reason'd: "These through us have been
So foil'd, with loss and mockery so complete,
As needs must sting them sore. If anger then
Be to their evil will conjoin'd, more fell
They shall pursue us, than the savage hound
Snatches the leveret panting 'twixt his jaws."

Already I perceived my hair stand all
On end with terror, and look'd eager back.

"Teacher," I thus began, "if speedily
Thyself and me thou hide not, much I dread
Those evil talons. Even now behind
They urge us: quick imagination works



But the other proved
A goshawk able to rend well his foe ;
And in the boiling lake both fell.

Canto XXII., lines 137-139.



Scarcely had his feet
Reached to the lowest of the bed beneath,
When over us the steep they reach'd.

Canto XXIII., lines 52-54.

So forcibly, that I already feel them.”

He answer'd: “Were I formed of leaded glass,
I should not sooner draw unto myself
Thy outward image, than I now imprint
That from within. This moment came thy thoughts
Presented before mine, with similar act
And countenance similar, so that from both
I one design have framed. If the right coast
Incline so much, that we may thence descend
Into the other chasm, we shall escape
Secure from this imagined pursuit.”

He had not spoke his purpose to the end,
When I from far beheld them with spread wings
Approach to take us. Suddenly my guide
Caught me, even as a mother that from sleep
Is by the noise aroused, and near her sees
The climbing fires, who snatches up her babe
And flies ne'er pausing, careful more of him
Than of herself, that but a single vest
Clings round her limbs. Down from the jutting beach
Supine he cast him to that pendent rock,
Which closes on one part the other chasm.

Never ran water with such hurrying pace
Adown the tube to turn a land-mill's wheel,
When nearest it approaches to the spokes,
As then along that edge my master ran,
Carrying me in his bosom, as a child,
Not a companion. Scarcely had his feet
Reach'd to the lowest of the bed beneath,
When over us the steep they reach'd: but fear
In him was none; for that high Providence,
Which placed them ministers of the fifth fosse,
Power of departing thence took from them all.

There in the depth we saw a painted tribe,
Who paced with tardy steps around, and wept,
Faint in appearance and o'ercome with toil.

Caps had they on, with hoods, that fell low down
 Before their eyes, in fashion like to those
 Worn by the monks in Cologne. Their outside
 Was overlaid with gold, dazzling to view,
 But leaden all within, and of such weight,
 That Frederick's compared to these were straw.
 Oh, everlasting wearisome attire!

We yet once more with them together turn'd
 To leftward, on their dismal moan intent.
 But by the weight opprest, so slowly came
 The fainting people, that our company
 Was changed, at every movement of the step.

Whence I my guide address'd: "See that thou find
 Some spirit, whose name may by his deeds be known;
 And to that end look round thee as thou go'st."

Then one, who understood the Tuscan voice,
 Cried after us aloud: "Hold in your feet,
 Ye who so swiftly speed through the dusk air.
 Perchance from me thou shalt obtain thy wish."

Whereat my leader, turning, me bespake:
 "Pause, and then onward at their pace proceed."

I stayed, and saw two spirits in whose look
 Impatient eagerness of mind was mark'd
 To overtake me; but the load they bare
 And narrow path retarded their approach.

Soon as arrived, they with an eye askance
 Perused me, but spake not: then turning, each
 To other thus conferring said: "This one
 Seems, by the action of his throat, alive;
 And, be they dead, what privilege allows
 They walk unmantled by the cumbrous stole?"

Then thus to me: Tuscan, who visitest
 The college of the mourning hypocrites,
 Disdain not to instruct us who thou art."

"By Arno's pleasant stream," I thus replied,
 "In the great city I was bred and grew,



“ Tuscan, who visitest
The college of the mourning hypocrites,
Disdain not to instruct us who thou art.”

Canto XXIII., lines 92-94.



“ That pierced spirit, whom intent
Thou view'st, was he who gave the Pharisees
Counsel, that it were fitting for one man
To suffer for the people.”

Canto XXIII., lines 117-120.

And wear the body I have never worn.
 But who are ye, from whom such mighty grief,
 As now I witness, courseth down your cheeks?
 What torment breaks forth in this bitter woe?"

"Our bonnets gleaming white with orange hue,"
 One of them answer'd, "are so leaden gross,
 That with their weight they make the balances
 To crack beneath them. Joyous friars we were,
 Bologna's natives; Catalano I,
 He Loderingo named; and by thy land
 Together taken, as men used to take
 A single and indifferent arbiter,
 To reconcile their strifes. How there we sped,
 Gardingo's vicinage can best declare."

"Oh, friars!" I began, "your miseries——"
 But there brake off, for one had caught mine eye,
 Fix'd to a cross with three stakes on the ground:
 He, when he saw me, writhed himself, throughout
 Distorted, ruffling with deep sighs his beard.
 And Catalano, who thereof was 'ware,
 Thus spake: "That pierced spirit, whom intent
 Thou view'st, was he who gave the Pharisees
 Counsel, that it were fitting for one man
 To suffer for the people. He doth lie
 Transverse; nor any passes, but him first
 Behoves make feeling trial how each weighs.
 In straits like this along the fosse are placed
 The father of his consort, and the rest
 Partakers in that council, seed of ill
 And sorrow to the Jews." I noted then,
 How Virgil gazed with wonder upon him,
 Thus abjectly extended on the cross
 In banishment eternal. To the friar
 He next his words addressed: "We pray ye tell,
 If so be lawful, whether on our right
 Lies any opening in the rock, whereby

We both may issue hence, without constraint
On the dark angels, that compell'd they come
To lead us from this depth." He thus replied:
"Nearer than thou dost hope, there is a rock
From the great circle moving, which o'ersteps
Each vale of horror, save that here his cope
Is shatter'd. By the ruin ye may mount:
For on the side it slants, and most the height
Rises below." With head bent down awhile
My leader stood; then spake: "He warn'd us ill,
Who yonder hangs the sinners on his hook."

To whom the friar: "At Bologna erst
I many vices of the devil heard;
Among the rest was said, 'He is a liar,
And the father of lies!'" When he had spoke,
My leader with large strides proceeded on,
Somewhat disturb'd with anger in his look.

I therefore left the spirits heavy laden,
And, following, his beloved footsteps mark'd.

CANTO XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

Under the escort of his faithful master, Dante, not without difficulty, makes his way out of the sixth gulf, and in the seventh sees the robbers tormented by venomous and pestilent serpents. The soul of Vanni Fucci, who had pillaged the sacristy of Saint James in Pistoia, predicts some calamities that impended over that city, and over the Florentines.

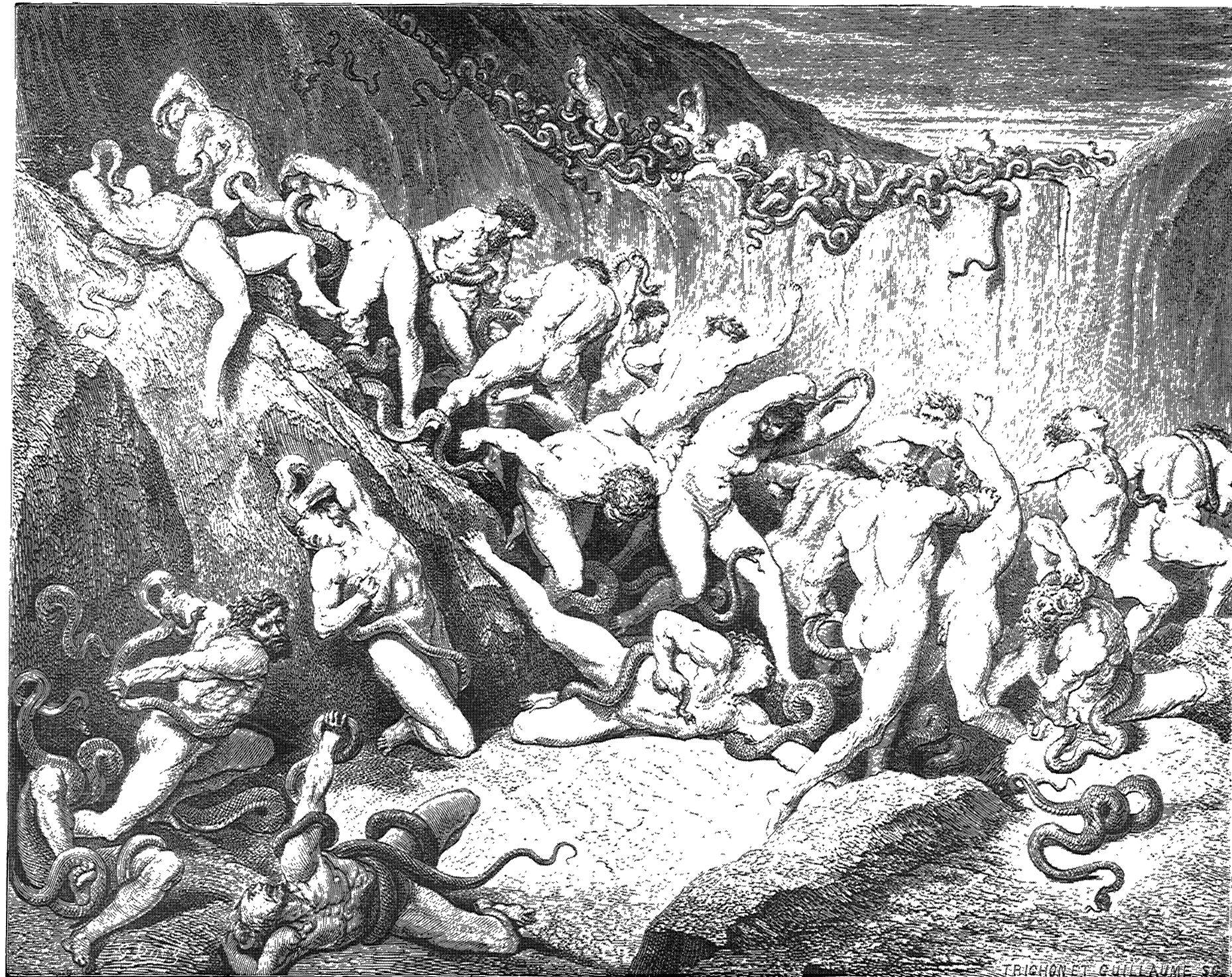
IN the year's early nonage, when the sun
Tempers his tresses in Aquarius' urn,
And now towards equal day the nights recede;
Whenas the rime upon the earth puts on
Her dazzling sister's image, but not long
Her milder sway endures; then riseth up
The village hind, whom fails his wintry store,
And looking out beholds the plain around
All whiten'd; whence impatiently he smites
His thighs, and to his hut returning in,
There paces to and fro, wailing his lot,
As a discomfited and helpless man;
Then comes he forth again, and feels new hope
Spring in his bosom, finding e'en thus soon
The world hath changed its countenance; grasps his crook,
And forth to pasture drives his little flock:
So me my guide dishearten'd, when I saw
His troubled forehead; and so speedily
That ill was cured; for at the fallen bridge
Arriving, towards me with a look as sweet,
He turn'd him back, as that I first beheld
At the steep mountain's foot. Regarding well
The ruin, and some counsel first maintain'd
With his own thought, he open'd wide his arm
And took me up. As one, who, while he works,

Computes his labor's issue, that he seems
 Still to foresee the effect; so lifting me
 Up to the summit of one peak, he fix'd
 His eye upon another. "Grapple that,"
 Said he, "but first make proof, if it be such
 As will sustain thee." For one capt with lead
 This were no journey. Scarcely he, though light,
 And I, though onward push'd from crag to crag,
 Could mount. And if the precinct of this coast
 Were not less ample than the last, for him
 I know not, but my strength had surely fail'd.
 But Malebolge all toward the mouth
 Inclining of the nethermost abyss,
 The site of every valley hence requires,
 That one side upward slope, the other fall.

At length the point from whence the utmost stone
 Juts down, we reach'd; soon as to that arrived,
 So was the breath exhausted from my lungs
 I could no further, but did seat me there.

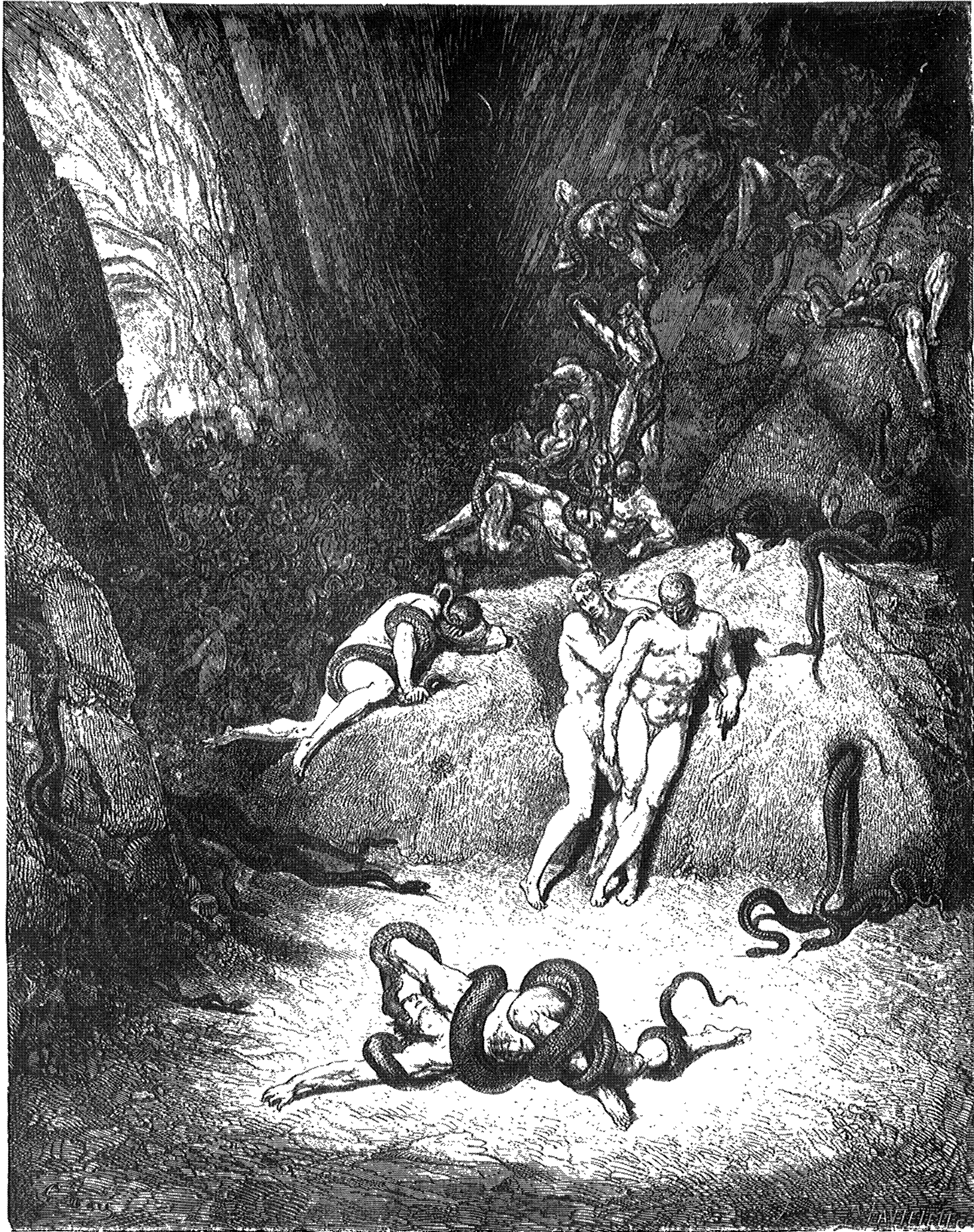
"Now needs thy best of man"; so spake my guide:
 "For not on downy plumes, nor under shade
 Of canopy reposing, fame is won;
 Without which whosoe'er consumes his days,
 Leaveth such vestige of himself on earth,
 As smoke in air, or foam upon the wave.
 Thou therefore rise: vanquish thy weariness
 By the mind's effort, in each struggle form'd
 To vanquish, if she suffer not the weight
 Of her corporeal frame to crush her down.
 A longer ladder yet remains to scale.
 From these to have escaped sufficeth not,
 If well thou note me, profit by my words."

I straightway rose, and show'd myself less spent
 Than I in truth did feel me. "On," I cried,
 "For I am stout and fearless." Up the rock
 Our way we held, more rugged than before,



Amid this dread exuberance of woe
Ran naked spirits wing'd with horrid fear,

Canto XXIV., lines 89, 90.



The other two
Look'd on, exclaiming, "Ah! how dost thou change,
Agnello!"

Narrower, and steeper far to climb. From talk
 I ceased not, as we journey'd, so to seem
 Least faint; whereat a voice from the other fosse
 Did issue forth, for utterance suited ill.
 Though on the arch that crosses where I stood,
 What were the words I knew not, but who spake
 Seem'd moved in anger. Down I stooped to look;
 But my quick eye might reach not to the depth
 For shrouding darkness; wherefore thus I spake:
 "To the next circle, teacher, bend thy steps,
 And from this wall dismount we; for as hence
 I hear and understand not, so I see
 Beneath, and nought discern." "I answer not,"
 Said he, "but by the deed. To fair request
 Silent performance maketh best return."

We from the bridge's head descended, where
 To the eighth mound it joins; and then, the chasm
 Opening to view, I saw a crowd within
 Of serpents terrible, so strange of shape
 And hideous, that remembrance in my veins
 Yet shrinks the vital current. Of her sands
 Let Libya vaunt no more: if *Jaculus*,
Pereas and *Chelyder* be her brood,
Cenchrus and *Amphisbæna*, plagues so dire
 Or in such numbers swarming ne'er she show'd.
 Not with all *Ethiopia*, and whate'er
 Above the *Erythræan* sea is spawn'd.

Amid this dread exuberance of woe
 Ran naked spirits wing'd with horrid fear,
 Nor hope had they of crevice where to hide,
 Or heliotrope to charm them out of view.
 With serpents were their hands behind them bound,
 Which through their reins infix'd the tail and head,
 Twisted in folds before. And, lo! on one
 Near to our side, darted an adder up,
 And, where the neck is on the shoulders tied,

Transpierced him. Far more quickly than e'er pen
 Wrote O or I, he kindled, burn'd, and changed
 To ashes all, poured out upon the earth.
 When there dissolved he lay, the dust again
 Uproll'd spontaneous, and the self-same form
 Instant resumed. So mighty sages tell,
 The Arabian Phoenix, when five hundred years
 Have well nigh circled, dies, and springs forthwith
 Renascent: blade nor herb throughout his life
 He tastes, but tears of frankincense alone
 And adorous amomum: swaths of nard
 And myrrh his funeral shroud. As one that falls,
 He knows not how, by force demoniac dragg'd
 To earth, or through obstruction fettering up
 In chains invisible the powers of man,
 Who, risen from his trance, gazeth around,
 Bewilder'd with the monstrous agony
 He hath indured, and wildly staring sighs;
 So stood aghast the sinner when he rose.

Oh! how severe God's judgment, that deals out
 Such blows in stormy vengeance. Who he was
 My teacher next inquired; and thus in few
 He answer'd: "Vanni Fucci am I call'd,
 Not long since rained down from Tuscany
 To this dire gullet. Me the bestial life
 And not the human pleased, mule that I was
 Who in Pistoia found my worthy den."

I then to Virgil: "Bid him stir not hence;
 And ask him what crime did thrust him hither: once
 A man I knew him, choleric and bloody."

The sinner heard and feigned not, but towards me
 His mind directing and his face, wherein
 Was dismal shame depicted, thus he spake:
 "It grieves me more to have been caught by thee
 In this sad plight, which thou beholdest, than
 When I was taken from the other life.

I have no power permitted to deny
What thou inquirest. I am doom'd thus low
To dwell, for that the sacristy by me
Was rifled of its goodly ornaments,
And with the guilt another falsely charged.
But that thou mayst not joy to see me thus,
So as thou e'er shalt 'scape this darksome realm,
Open thine ears and hear what I forebode.
Reft of the Neri first Pistoia pines;
Then Florence changeth citizens and laws;
From Valdimagra, drawn by wrathful Mars,
A vapor rises, wrapt in turbid mists,
And sharp and eager driveth on the storm
With arrowy hurtling o'er Piceno's field,
Whence suddenly the cloud shall burst, and strike
Each helpless Bianco prostrate to the ground.
This have I told, that grief may rend thy heart."

CANTO XXV.

ARGUMENT.

The sacrilegious Fucci vents his fury in blasphemy, is seized by serpents, and flying is pursued by Cacus in the form of a centaur, who is described with a swarm of serpents on his haunch, and a dragon on his shoulders breathing forth fire. Our poet then meets with the spirits of three of his countrymen, two of whom undergo a marvelous transformation in his presence.

WHEN he had spoke, the sinner raised his hands
Pointed in mockery, and cried: "Take them, God!
I level them at thee." From that day forth
The serpents were my friends; for round his neck
One of them rolling twisted, as it said,
"Be silent tongue!" Another, to his arms
Upliding, tied them, riveting itself
So close, it took from them the power to move.
Pistoia! ah, Pistoia! why dost doubt
To turn thee into ashes, cumbering earth
No longer, since in evil act so far
Thou hast undone thy seed? I did not mark,
Through all the gloomy circles of the abyss,
Spirit, that swell'd so proudly 'gainst his God;
Not him, who headlong fell from Thebes. He fled,
Nor utter'd more; and after him there came
A centaur full of fury, shouting, "Where,
Where is the caitiff?" On Maremma's marsh
Swarm not the serpent tribe, as on his haunch
They swarm'd, to where the human face begins.
Behind his head, upon the shoulders, lay
With open wings a dragon, breathing fire
On whomso'er he met. To me my guide:
"Cacus is this, who underneath the rock

Of Aventine spread oft a lake of blood.
 He, from his brethren parted, here must tread
 A different journey, for his fraudulent theft
 Of the great herd that near him stall'd; whence found
 His felon deeds their end, beneath the mace
 Of stout Alcides, that perchance laid on
 A hundred blows, and not the tenth was felt."

While yet he spake, the centaur sped away:
 And under us three spirits came, of whom
 Nor I nor he was ware, till they exclaim'd,
 "Say who are ye!" We then brake off discourse,
 Intent on these alone. I knew them not:
 But, as it chanceth oft, befell, that one
 Had need to name another. "Where," said he,
 "Doth Cianfa lurk?" I, for a sign my guide
 Should stand attentive, placed against my lips
 The finger lifted. If, O reader! now
 Thou be not apt to credit what I tell,
 No marvel; for myself do scarce allow
 The witness of mine eyes. But as I look'd
 Toward them, lo! a serpent with six feet
 Springs forth on one, and fastens full upon him:
 His midmost grasp'd the belly, a forefoot
 Seized on each arm (while deep in either cheek
 He flesh'd his fangs); the hinder on the thighs
 Were spread, 'twixt which the tail inserted curl'd
 Upon the reins behind. Ivy ne'er clasp'd
 A dodder'd oak, as round the other's limbs
 The hideous monster intertwined his own.
 Then, as they both had been of burning wax,
 Each melted into other, mingling hues,
 That which was either now was seen no more.
 Thus up the shrinking paper, ere it burns,
 A brown tint glides, not turning yet to black,
 And the clean white expires. The other two
 Look'd on, exclaiming, "Ah! how dost thou change,

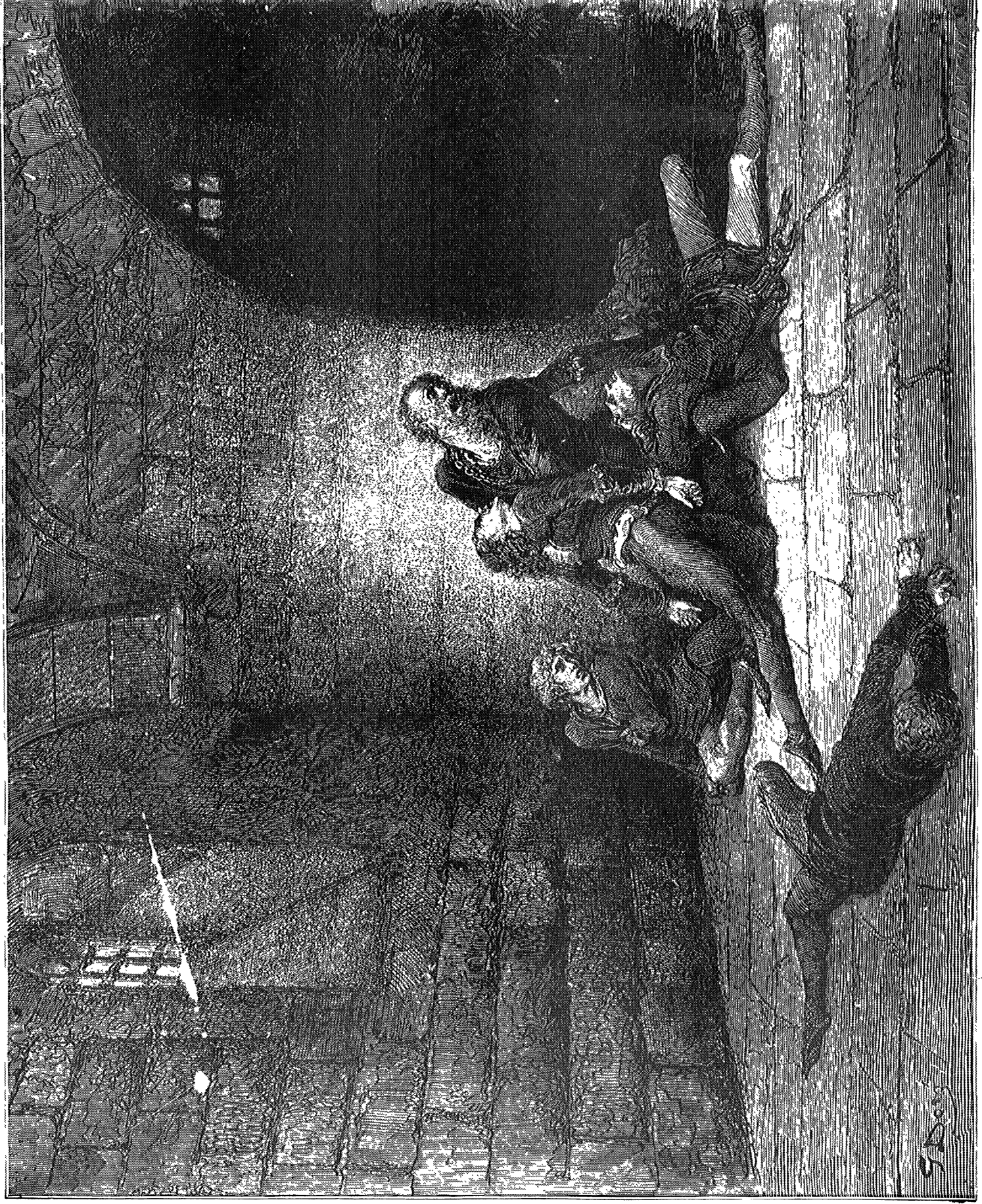
Agnello! See! thou art nor double now,
 Nor only one." The two heads now became
 One, and two figures blended in one form
 Appear'd, where both were lost. Of the four lengths
 Two arms were made: the belly and the chest,
 The thighs and legs, into such members changed
 As never eye hath seen. Of former shape
 All trace was vanish'd. Two, yet neither, seem'd
 That image miscreate, and so pass'd on
 With tardy steps. As underneath the scourge
 Of the fierce dog-star that lays bare the fields,
 Shifting from brake to brake the lizard seems
 A flash of lightning, if he thwart the road;
 So toward the entrails of the other two
 Approaching seem'd an adder all on fire,
 As the dark pepper-grain livid and swart.
 In that part, whence our life is nourish'd first,
 One he transpierced; then down before him fell
 Stretch'd out. The pierced spirit look'd on him,
 But spake not; yea, stood motionless and yawn'd,
 As if by sleep or feverous fit assail'd.
 He eyed the serpent, and the serpent him.
 One from the wound, the other from the mouth
 Breathed a thick smoke, whose vapory columns join'd.

Lucan in mute attention now may hear,
 Nor thy disastrous fate, Sabellus, tell,
 Nor thine, Nasidius. Ovid now be mute.
 What if in warbling fiction he record
 Cadmus and Arethusa, to a snake
 Him changed, and her into a fountain clear,
 I envy not; for never face to face
 Two natures thus transmuted did he sing,
 Wherein both shapes were ready to assume
 The other's substance. They in mutual guise
 So answer'd, that the serpent split his train
 Divided to a fork, and the pierced spirit

Drew close his steps together, legs and thighs
Compacted, that no sign of juncture soon
Was visible: the tail, disparted, took
The figure which the spirit lost; its skin
Softening, his indurated to a rind.
The shoulders next I mark'd, that entering join'd
The monster's arm-pits, whose two shorter feet
So lengthen'd, as the others dwindling shrunk.
The feet behind then twisting up became
That part that man conceals, which in the wretch
Was cleft in twain. While both the shadowy smoke
With a new color veils, and generates
The excrescent pile on one, peeling it off
From the other body, lo! upon his feet
One upright rose, and prone the other fell.
Nor yet their glaring and malignant lamps
Were shifted, though each feature changed beneath.
Of him who stood erect, the mounting face
Retreated towards the temples, and what there
Superfluous matter came, shot out in ears
From the smooth cheeks; the rest, not backward dragg'd,
Of its excess did shape the nose; and swell'd
Into due size protuberant the lips.
He, on the earth who lay, meanwhile extends
His sharpen'd visage, and draws down the ears
Into the head, as doth the slug his horns.
His tongue, continuous before and apt
For utterance, severs; and the other's fork
Closing unites. That done, the smoke was laid.
The soul, transform'd into the brute, glides off,
Hissing along the vale, and after him
The other talking sputters; but soon turn'd
His new-grown shoulders on him, and in few
Thus to another spake: "Along this path
Crawling, as I have done, speed Buoso now!"
So saw I fluctuate in successive change

The unsteady ballast of the seventh hold :
And here if aught my pen have swerved, events
So strange may be its warrant. O'er mine eyes
Confusion hung, and on my thoughts amaze.

Yet 'scaped they not so covertly, but well,
I mark'd Sciancato: he alone it was
Of the three first that came, who chang'd not: thou
The other's fate, Gaville! still dost rue.



“Hast no help
For me, my father!”

Canto XXVIII., lines 67, 68.



Then, fasting got

The mastery of grief,

Canto XXXIII., lines 73, 74.

CANTO XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

Remounting by the steps, down which they had descended to the seventh gulf, they go forward to the arch that stretches over the eighth, and from thence behold numberless flames wherein are punished the evil counsellors, each flame containing a sinner, save one, in which were Diomede and Ulysses, the latter of whom relates the manner of his death.

FLORENCE, exult! for thou so mightily
Hast thriven, that o'er land and sea thy wings
Thou beatest, and thy name spreads over hell.
Among the plunderers, such the three I found
Thy citizens; whence shame to me thy son,
And no proud honor to thyself redounds.

But if our minds, when dreaming near the dawn,
Are of the truth presageful, thou ere long
Shalt feel what Prato (not to say the rest)
Would fain have come upon thee; and that chance
Were in good time, if it befell thee now.
Would so it were, since it must needs befall!
For as time wears me, I shall grieve the more.

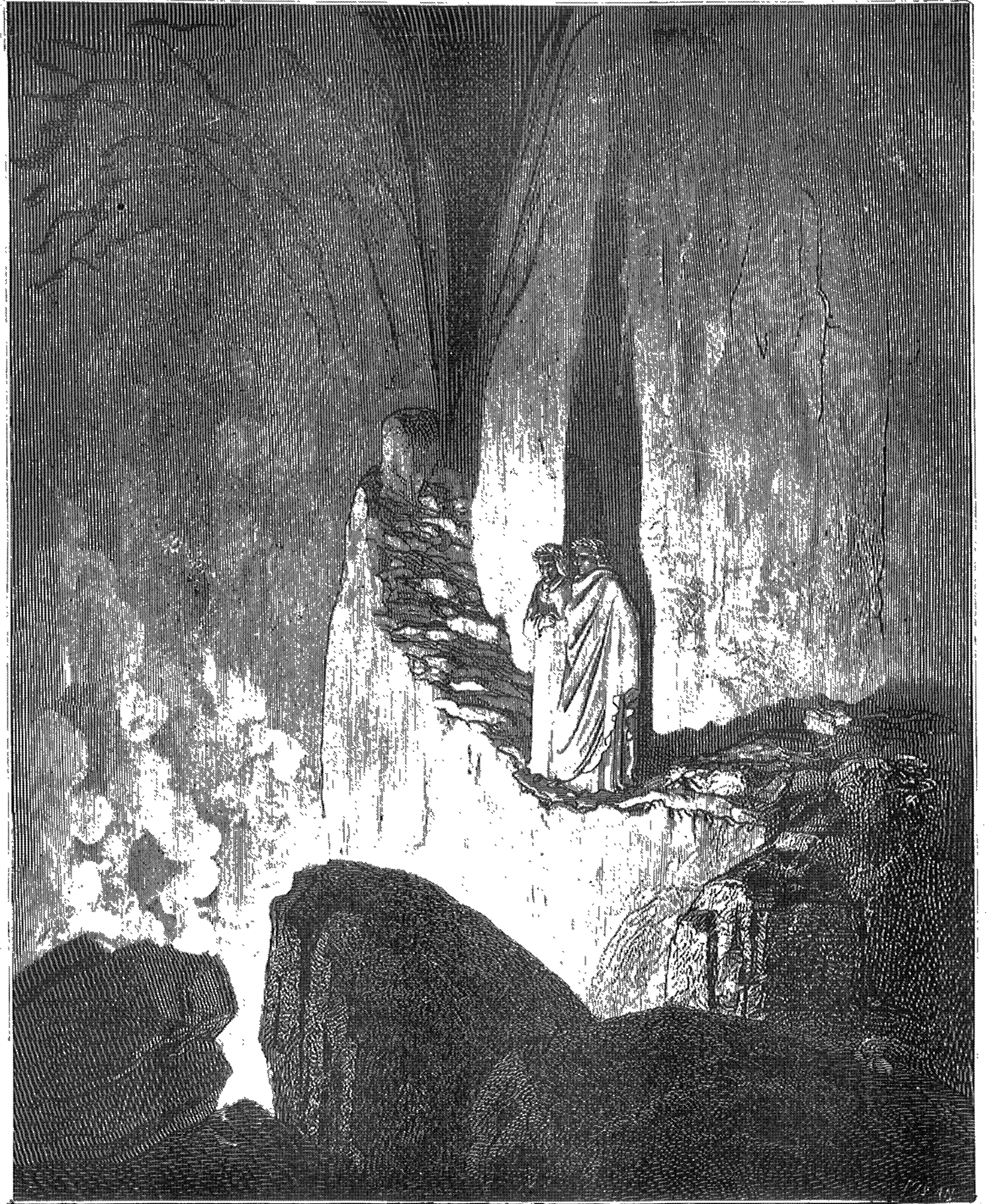
We from the depth departed; and my guide
Remounting scaled the flinty steps, which late
We downward traced, and drew me up the steep.
Pursuing thus our solitary way
Among the crags and splinters of the rock,
Sped not our feet without the help of hands.

Then sorrow seized me, which e'en now revives,
As my thought turns again to what I saw,
And, more than I am wont, I rein and curb
The powers of nature in me, lest they run
Where Virtue guides not; that, if aught of good

My gentle star or something better gave me,
I envy not myself the precious boon.

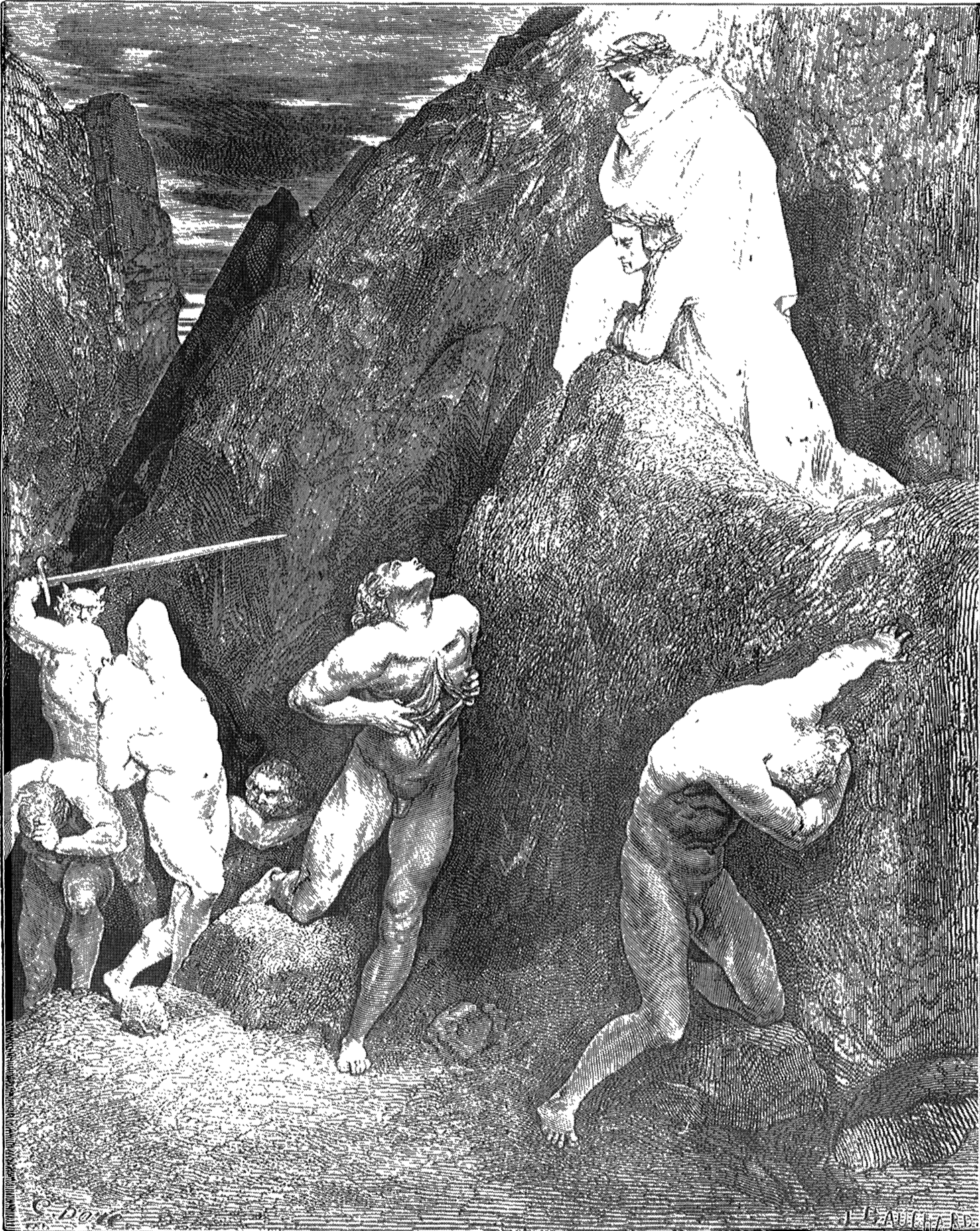
As in that season, when the sun least veils
His face that lightens all, what time the fly
Gives way to the shrill gnat, the peasant then,
Upon some cliff reclined, beneath him sees
Fire-flies innumerable spangling o'er the vale,
Vineyard or tilth, where his day-labor lies;
With flames so numberless throughout its space
Shone the eighth chasm, apparent, when the depth
Was to my view exposed. As he, whose wrongs
The bears avenged, at its departure saw
Elijah's chariot, when the steeds erect
Raised their steep flight for heaven; his eyes, meanwhile,
Straining pursued them, till the flame alone,
Upsoaring, like a misty speck, he kenn'd:
E'en thus along the gulf moves every flame,
A sinner so enfolded close in each,
That none exhibits token of the theft.

Upon the bridge I forward bent to look,
And grasp'd a flinty mass, or else had fallen,
Though push'd not from the height. The guide, who mark'd
How I did gaze attentive, thus began:
"Within these ardors are the spirits, each
Swathed in confining fire." "Master! thy word,"
I answer'd, "hath assured me; yet I deem'd
Already of the truth, already wish'd
To ask thee who is in yon fire, that comes
So parted at the summit, as it seem'd
Ascending from that funeral pile where lay
The Theban brothers," He replied: "Within,
Ulysses there and Diomedes endure
Their penal tortures, thus to vengeance now
Together hasting, as erewhile to wrath.
These in the flame with ceaseless groans deplore
The ambush of the horse, that open'd wide
A portal for that goodly seed to pass,



The guide, who mark'd
How I did gaze attentive, thus began :
“ Within these ardors are the spirits, each
Swathed in confining fire.”

Canto XXVI., lines 46-49.



“ Now mark how I do rip me : lo !
How is Mahomet mangled.”

Canto XXVIII., lines 30, 31.

Which sow'd imperial Rome ; nor less the guile
 Lament they, whence, of her Achilles 'reft,
 Deïdamia yet in death complains.
 And there is rued the stratagem that Troy
 Of her Palladium spoil'd." If they have power
 Of utterance from within these sparks," said I,
 "Oh, master! think my prayer a thousand-fold
 In repetition urged, that thou vouchsafe
 To pause till here the horned flame arrive.
 See how toward it with desire I bend."

He thus: "Thy prayer is worthy of much praise,
 And I accept it therefore: but do thou
 Thy tongue refrain: to question them be mine;
 For I divine thy wish; and they perchance,
 For they were Greeks, might shun discourse with thee."

When there the flame had come, where time and place,
 Seem'd fitting to my guide, he thus began:
 "O ye, who dwell two spirits in one fire!
 If, living, I of you did merit aught,
 Whate'er the measure were of that desert,
 When in the world my lofty strain I pour'd,
 Move ye not on, till one of you unfold
 In what clime death o'ertook him self-destroy'd."

Of the old flame forthwith the greater horn
 Began to roll, murmuring, as a fire
 That labors with the wind, then to and fro
 Wagging the top, as a tongue uttering sounds,
 Threw out its voice, and spake: "When I escaped
 From Circe, who beyond a circling year
 Had held me near Caieta by her charms,
 Ere thus Æneas yet had named the shore;
 Nor fondness for my son, nor reverence
 Of my old father, nor return of love,
 That should have crown'd Penelope with joy,
 Could overcome in me the zeal I had
 To explore the world, and search the ways of life,
 Man's evil and his virtue. Forth I sail'd

Into the deep illimitable main,
With but one barque, and the small faithful band
That yet cleaved to me. As Iberia far,
Far as Marocco, either shore I saw,
And the Sardinian and each isle beside
Which round that ocean bathes. Tardy with age
Were I and my companions, when we came
To the strait pass, where Hercules ordain'd
The boundaries not to be o'erstepp'd by man.
The walls of Seville to my right I left,
On the other hand already Ceuta past.
'Oh, brothers!' I began, 'who to the west
Through perils without number now have reach'd;
To this the short remaining watch, that yet
Our senses have to wake, refuse not proof
Of the unpeopled world, following the track
Of Phœbus. Call to mind from whence ye sprang:
Ye were not form'd to live the life of brutes,
But virtue to pursue, and knowledge high.'
With these few words I sharpen'd for the voyage
The mind of my associates, that I then
Could scarcely have withheld them. To the dawn
Our poop we turn'd, and for the witless flight
Made our oars wings, still gaining on the left.
Each star of the other pole night now beheld,
And ours so low, that from the ocean floor
It rose not. Five times re-illumed, as oft
Vanish'd the light from underneath the moon,
Since the deep way we enter'd, when from far
Appeared a mountain dim, loftiest methought
Of all I e'er beheld. Joy seized us straight;
But soon to mourning changed. From the new land
A whirlwind sprung, and at her foremost side
Did strike the vessel. Thrice it whirl'd her round
With all the waves: the fourth time lifted up
The poop, and sank the prow: so fate decreed:
And over us the booming billow closed."

CANTO XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

The poet, treating of the same punishment as in the last canto, relates that he turned towards a flame in which was the Count Guido da Montefeltro, whose inquiries respecting the state of Romagna he answers; and Guido is thereby induced to declare who he is, and why condemned to that torment.

NOW upward rose the flame, and still'd its light
To speak no more, and now pass'd on with leave
From the mild poet gain'd; when following came
Another, from whose top a sound confused,
Forth issuing, drew our eyes that way to look.

As the Sicilian bull, that rightfully
His cries first echoed who had shaped its mold,
Did so rebellow, with the voice of him
Tormented, that the brazen monster seem'd
Pierced through with pain; thus, while no way they found,
Nor avenue immediate through the flame,
Into its language turn'd the dismal words:
But soon as they had won their passage forth,
Up from the point, which vibrating obey'd
Their motion at the tongue, these sounds were heard:
"Oh, thou! to whom I now direct my voice,
That lately didst exclaim in Lombard phrase,
'Depart thou; I solicit thee no more';
Though somewhat tardy I perchance arrive,
Let it not irk thee here to pause awhile,
And with me parley: lo! it irks not me,
And yet I burn. If but e'en now thou fall
Into this blind world, from that pleasant land
Of Latium, whence I draw my sum of guilt,
Tell me if those who in Romagna dwell

Have peace or war. For of the mountains there
Was I, betwixt Urbino and the height
Whence Tiber first unlock's his mighty flood."

Leaning I listen'd yet with heedful ear,
When, as he touch'd my side, the leader thus:
"Speak thou: he is a Latian." My reply
Was ready, and I spake without delay:
"Oh, spirit! who art hidden here below,
Never was thy Romagna without war
In her proud tyrants' bosoms, nor is now:
But open war there left I none. The state,
Ravenna hath maintain'd this many a year,
Is steadfast. There Polenta's eagle broods;
And in his broad circumference of plume
O'ershadows Cervia. The green talons grasp
The land, that stood erewhile the proof so long
And piled in bloody heap the host of France.

"The old mastiff of Verruchio and the young,
That tore Montagna in their wrath, still make,
Where they are wont, an auger of their fangs.

"Lamone's city, and Santerno's, range
Under the lion of the snowy lair,
Inconstant partisan, that changeth sides,
Or ever summer yields to winter's frost.
And she whose flank is wash'd of Savio's wave,
As 'twixt the level and the steep she lies,
Lives so 'twixt tyrant power and liberty.

"Now tell us, I entreat thee, who art thou:
Be not more hard than others. In the world,
So may thy name still rear its forehead high."

Then roar'd awhile the fire, its sharpen'd point
On either side waved, and thus breath'd at last:
"If I did think my answer were to one
Who ever could return unto the world,
This flame should rest unshaken. But since ne'er,
If true be told me, any from this depth

Has found his upward way, I answer thee,
Nor fear lest infamy record the words.

“A man of arms at first, I clothed me then
In good Saint Francis' girdle, hoping so
To have made amends. And certainly my hope
Had fail'd not, but that he, whom curses light on,
The high priest, again seduced me into sin.
And how, and wherefore, listen while I tell.
Long as this spirit moved the bones and pulp
My mother gave me, less my deeds bespake
The nature of the lion than the fox.
All ways of winding subtlety I knew,
And with such art conducted, that the sound
Reach'd the world's limit. Soon as to that part
Of life I found me come, when each behoves
To lower sails and gather in the lines;
That, which before had pleased me, then I rued,
And to repentance and confession turn'd,
Wretch that I was; and well it had bested me.
The chief of the new Pharisees meantime,
Waging his warfare near the Lateran,
Not with the Saracens or Jews (his foes
All Christians were, nor against Acre one
Had fought, nor traffick'd in the Soldan's land).
He, his great charge nor sacred ministry,
In himself revered, nor in me that cord
Which used to mark with leanness whom it girded.
As in Soracte, Constantine besought,
To cure his leprosy, Sylvester's aid;
So me, to cure the fever of his pride,
This man besought: my counsel to that end
He ask'd; and I was silent; for his words
Seem'd drunken: but forthwith he thus resumed:
'From thy heart banish fear: of all offense
I hitherto absolve thee. In return,
Teach me my purpose so to execute,

That Penestrino cumber earth no more.
 Heaven, as thou knowest, I have no power to shut
 And open: and the keys are therefore twain,
 The which my predecessor meanly prized.'

"Then, yielding to the forceful arguments,
 Of silence as more perilous I deem'd,
 And answer'd: 'Father, since thou washest me
 Clear of that guilt wherein I now must fall,
 Large promise with performance scant, be sure,
 Shall make thee triumph in thy lofty seat.'

"When I was number'd with the dead, then came
 Saint Francis for me; but a cherub dark
 He met, who cried, 'Wrong me not; he is mine,
 And must below, to join the wretched crew,
 For the deceitful counsel which he gave.
 E'er since I watch'd him, hovering at his hair.
 No power can the impenitent absolve;
 Nor to repent, and will, at once consist,
 By contradiction absolute forbid.'
 Oh, misery! how I shook myself when he
 Seized me and cried, 'Thou haply thought'st me not
 A disputant in logic so exact!'"
 To Minos down he bore me, and the judge
 Twined eight times round his callous back the tail,
 Which biting with excess of rage, he spake:
 'This is a guilty soul, that in the fire
 Must vanish.' Hence, perdition-doom'd, I rove
 A prey to rankling sorrow, in this garb."

When he had thus fulfill'd his words, the flame
 In dolor parted, beating to and fro
 And writhing its sharp horn. We onward went,
 I and my leader, up along the rock,
 Far as another arch, that overhangs
 The fosse, wherein the penalty is paid
 Of those who load them with committed sin.

CANTO XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

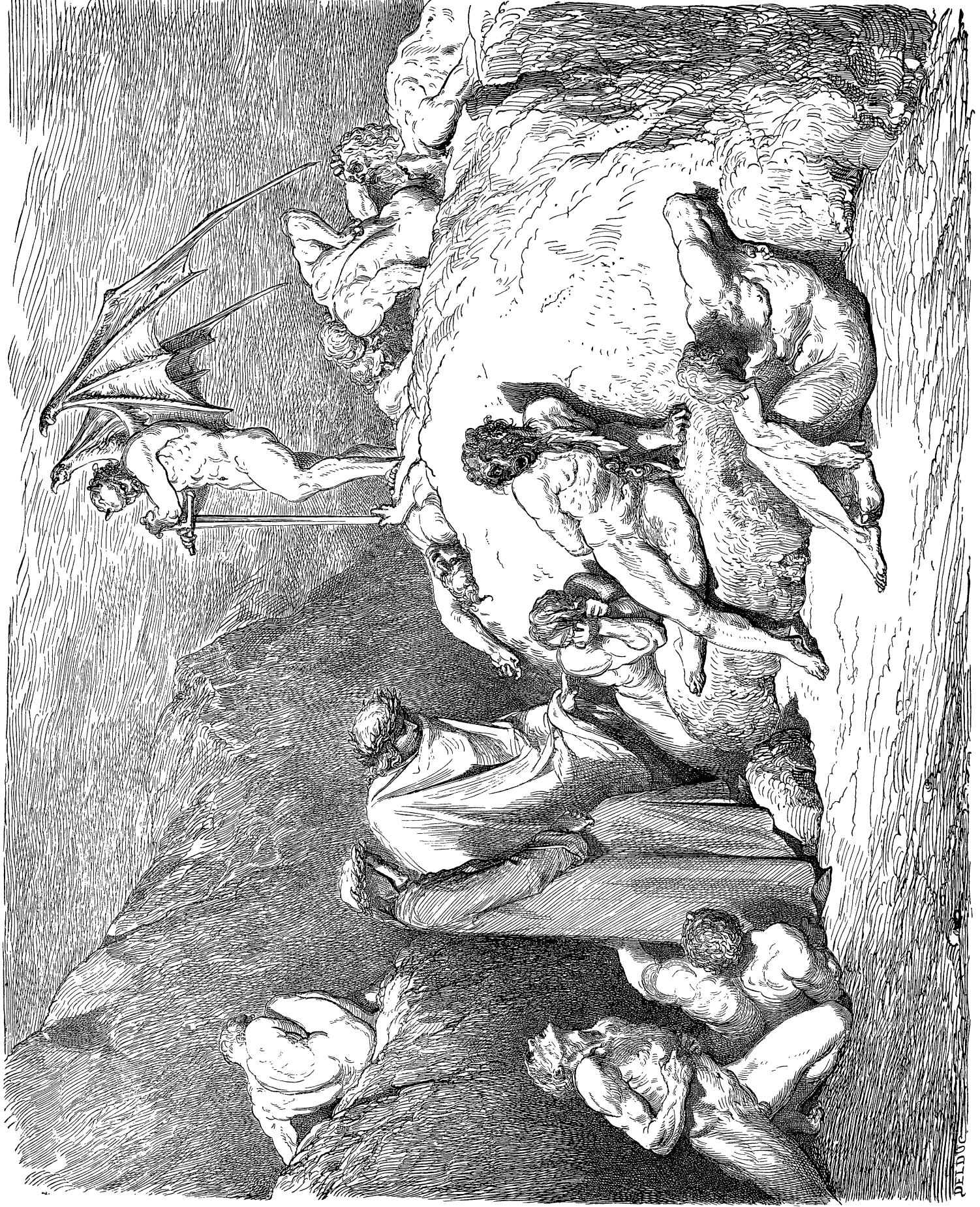
They arrive in the ninth gulf, where the sowers of scandal, schismatics, and heretics are seen with their limbs miserably maimed or divided in different ways. Among these the poet finds Mahomet, Piero da Medicina, Curio, Mosca, and Bertrand de Born.

WHO, e'en in words unfetter'd, might at full
Tell of the wounds and blood that now I saw,
Though he repeated oft the tale? No tongue
So vast a theme could equal, speech and thought
Both impotent alike. If in one band
Collected, stood the people all, who e'er
Pour'd on Apulia's happy soil their blood,
Slain by the Trojans, and in that long war,
When of the rings the measured booty made
A pile so high, as Rome's historian writes
Who errs not; with the multitude, that felt
The grinding force of Guiscard's Norman steel,
And those the rest, whose bones are gather'd yet
At Ceperano, there where treachery
Branded the Apulian name, or where beyond
Thy walls, O Tagliacozzo, without arms
The old Alardo conquer'd; and his limbs
One were to show transpierced, another his
Clean lopt away; a spectacle like this
Were but a thing of nought, to the hideous sight
Of the ninth chasm. A rundlet, that hath lost
Its middle or side stave, gapes not so wide
As one I mark'd, torn from the chin throughout
Down to the hinder passage: 'twixt the legs

Dangling his entrails hung, the midriff lay
Open to view, and wretched ventricle,
That turns the englutted aliment to dross.

Whilst eagerly I fix on him my gaze,
He eyed me, with his hands laid his breast bare,
And cried, "Now mark how I do rip me: lo!
How is Mahomet mangled: before me
Walks Ali weeping, from the chin his face
Cleft to the forelock; and the others all,
Whom here thou seest, while they lived, did sow
Scandal and schism, and therefore thus are rent.
A fiend is here behind, who with his sword
Hacks us thus cruelly, slivering again
Each of this realm, when we have compast round
The dismal way; for first our gashes close
Ere we repass before him. But, say who
Art thou, that standest musing on the rock,
Haply so lingering to delay the pain
Sentenced upon thy crimes." "Him death not yet,"
My guide rejoin'd, "hath overta'en, nor sin
Conducts to torment; but, that he may make
Full trial of your state, I who am dead
Must through the depths of hell, from orb to orb,
Conduct him. Trust my words; for they are true."

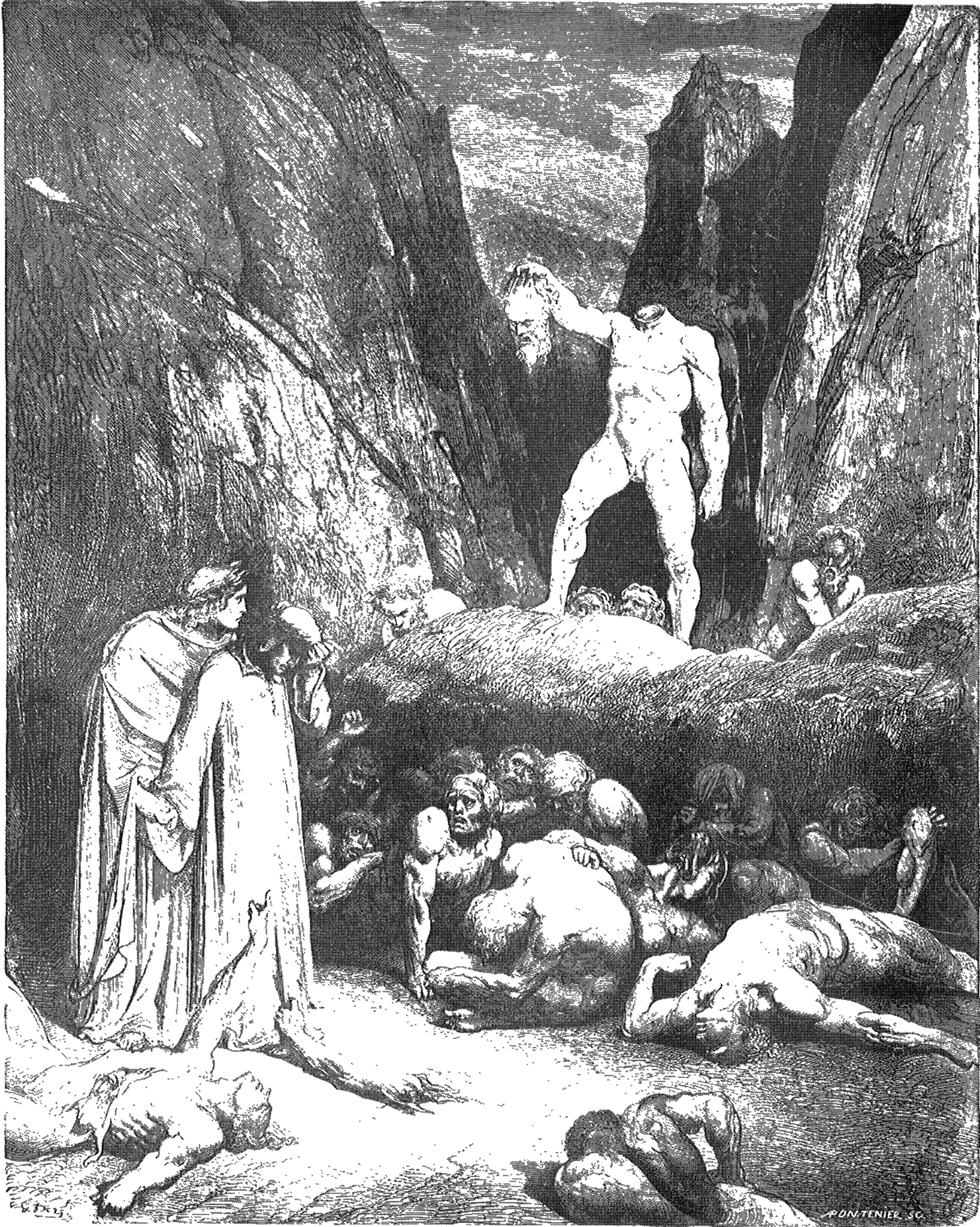
More than a hundred spirits when that they heard,
Stood in the fosse to mark me, through amaze
Forgetful of their pangs. "Thou, who perchance
Shalt shortly view the sun, this warning thou
Bear to Dolcino: bid him, if he wish not
Here soon to follow me, that with good store
Of food he arm him, lest imprisoning snows
Yield him a victim to Novara's power;
No easy conquest else": with foot upraised
For stepping, spake Mahomet, on the ground
Then fix'd it to depart. Another shade,
Pierced in the throat, his nostrils mutilate



Call thou to mind

Piero of Medicina.

Canto XXVIII., lines 68, 69.



By the hair

It bore the sever'd member, lantern-wise
Pendent in hand, which look'd at us, and said,
"Woe's me!"

Canto XXXVIII., lines 116-119.

E'en from beneath the eyebrows, and one ear
 Lopt off, who, with the rest, through wonder stood
 Gazing, before the rest advanced, and bared
 His windpipe, that without was all o'ersmear'd
 With crimson stain. "Oh, thou!" said he, "whom sin
 Condemns not, and whom erst (unless too near
 Resemblance do deceive me) I aloft
 Have seen on Latian ground, call thou to mind
 Piero of Medicina, if again
 Returning, thou behold'st the pleasant land
 That from Vercelli slopes to Mercabò;
 And there instruct the twain, whom Fano boasts
 Her worthiest sons, Guido and Angelo,
 That if 'tis given us here to scan aright
 The future, they out of life's tenement
 Shall be cast forth, and whelm'd under the waves
 Near to Cattolica, through perfidy
 Of a fell tyrant. 'Twixt the Cyprian isle
 And Balearic, ne'er hath Neptune seen
 An injury so foul, by pirates done,
 Or Argive crew of old. That one-eyed traitor
 (Whose realm, there is a spirit here were fain
 His eye had still lack'd sight of) them shall bring
 To conference with him, then so shape his end,
 That they shall need not 'gainst Focara's wind
 Offer up vow or prayer." I answering thus:
 "Declare, as thou dost wish that I above
 May carry tidings of thee, who is he,
 In whom that sight doth wake such sad remembrance."

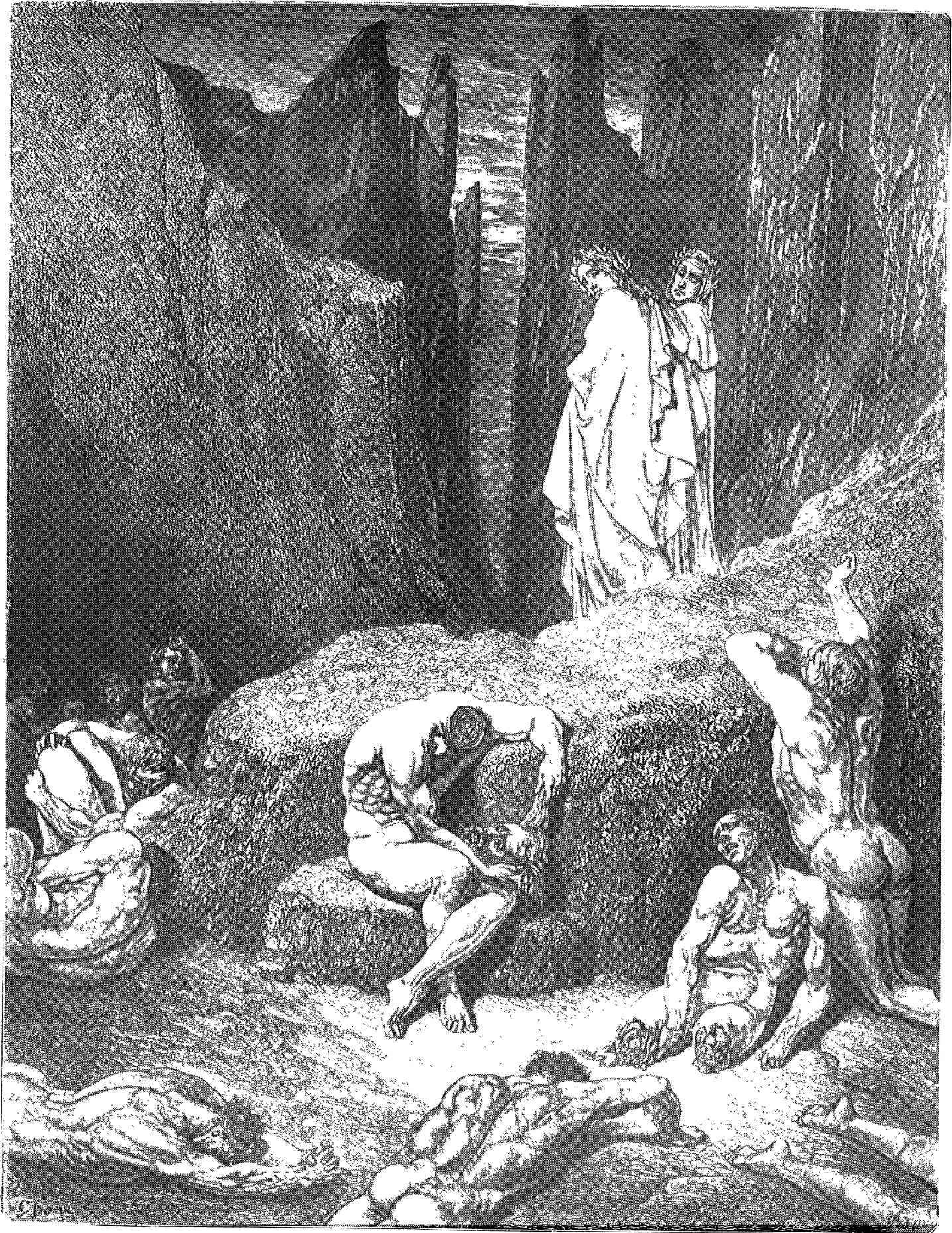
Forthwith he laid his hand on the cheek-bone
 Of one, his fellow-spirit, and his jaws
 Expanding, cried: "Lo! this is he I wot of:
 He speaks not for himself; the outcast this,
 Who overwhelm'd the doubt in Cæsar's mind,
 Affirming that delay to men prepared
 Was ever harmful." Oh! how terrified

Methought was Curio, from whose throat was cut
 The tongue, which spake that hardy word. Then one,
 Maim'd of each hand, uplifted in the gloom
 The bleeding stumps, that they with gory spots
 Sullied his face, and cried: "Remember thee
 Of Mosca too; I who, alas! exclaim'd,
 'The deed once done, there is an end,' that proved
 A seed of sorrow to the Tuscan race."

I added: "Ay, and death to thine own tribe."

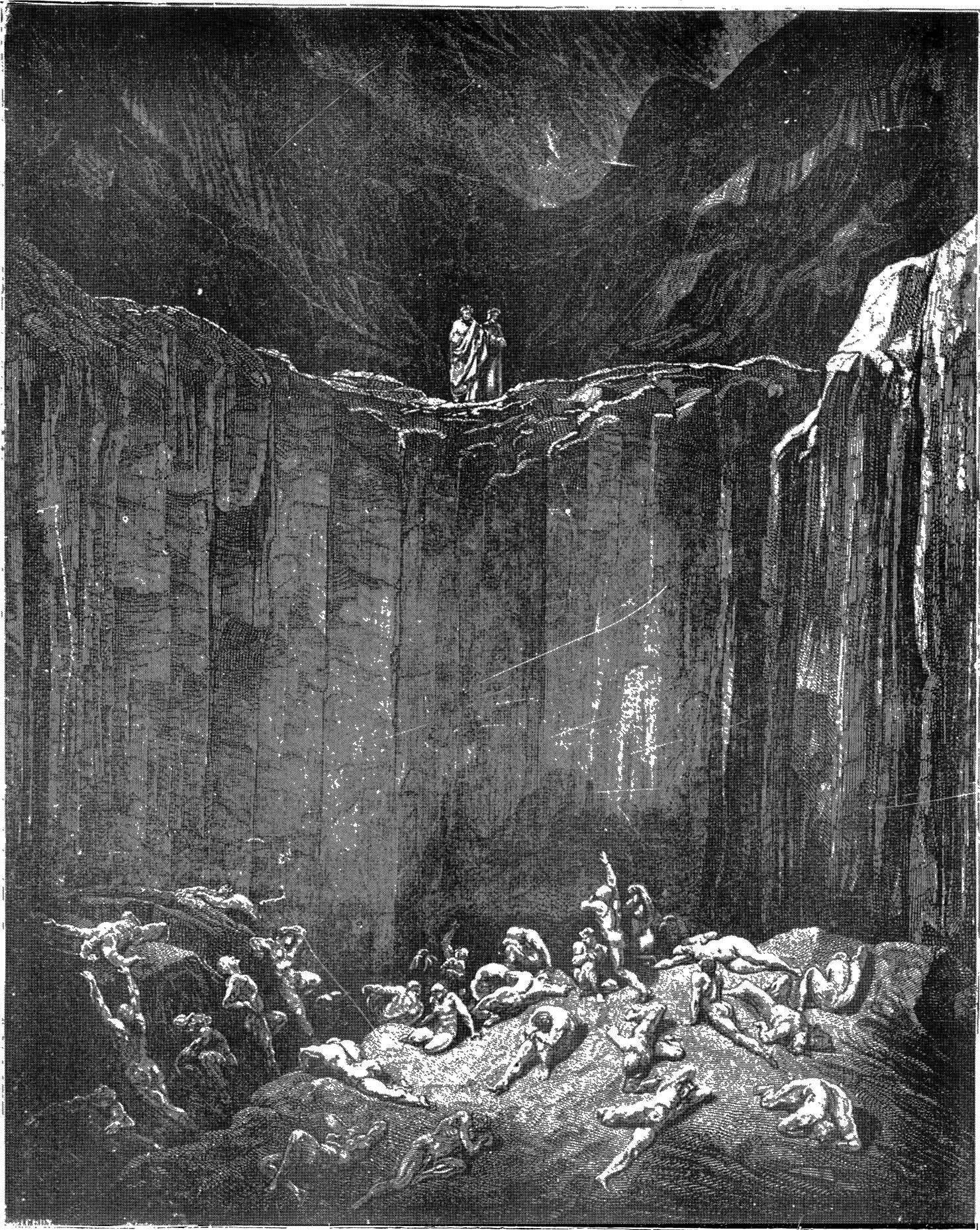
Whence, heaping woe on woe, he hurried off,
 As one grief-stung to madness. But I there
 Still lingered to behold the troop, and saw
 Thing, such as I may fear without more proof
 To tell of, but that conscience makes me firm,
 The boon companion, who her strong breastplate
 Buckles on him, that feels no guilt within,
 And bids him on and fear not. Without doubt
 I saw, and yet it seems to pass before me,
 A headless trunk that even as the rest
 Of the sad flock paced onward. By the hair
 It bore the sever'd member, lantern-wise
 Pendent in hand, which look'd at us, and said,
 "Woe's me!" The spirit lighted thus himself;
 And two there were in one, and one in two.
 How that may be, he knows who ordereth so.

When at the bridge's foot direct he stood,
 His arm aloft he rear'd, thrusting the head
 Full in our view, that nearer we might hear
 The words, which thus it utter'd: "Now behold
 This grievous torment, thou, who breathing go'st
 To spy the dead: behold, if any else
 Be terrible as this. And, that on earth
 Thou mayst bear tidings of me, know that I
 Am Bertrand, he of Born, who gave King John
 The counsel mischievous. Father and son
 I set at mutual war. For Absalom



But Virgil roused me : “ What yet gazest on ?
Wherefore doth fasten yet thy sight below
Amongst the maim'd and miserable shades ? ”

Canto XXIX., lines 4-6.



Then my sight
Was livelier to explore the depth, wherein
The minister of the most mighty Lord,
All searching Justice, dooms to punishment
The forgers noted on her dread record.

Canto XXIX., lines 52-56.

And David more did not Ahithophel,
Spurring them on maliciously to strife.
For parting those so closely knit, my brain
Parted, alas! I carry from its source,
That in this trunk inhabits. Thus the law
Of retribution fiercely works in me.”

CANTO XXIX.

ARGUMENT.

Dante, at the desire of Virgil, proceeds onward to the bridge that crosses the tenth gulf, from whence he hears the cries of the alchemists and forgers, who are tormented therein ; but not being able to discern anything on account of the darkness, they descend the rock, that bounds this the last of the compartments in which the eighth circle is divided, and then behold the spirits who are afflicted by divers plagues and diseases. Two of them, namely, Grifolino of Arezzo, and Capocchio of Sienna, are introduced speaking.

SO were mine eyes inebriate with the view
Of the vast multitude, whom various wounds
Disfigured, that they long'd to stay and weep.

But Virgil roused me : "What yet gazest on ?
Wherefore doth fasten yet thy sight below
Among the maim'd and miserable shades ?
Thou hast not shown in any chasm beside
This weakness. Know, if thou wouldst number them,
That two and twenty miles the valley winds
Its circuit, and already is the moon
Beneath our feet : the time permitted now
Is short ; and more, not seen, remains to see."

"If thou," I straight replied, "had'st weigh'd the cause,
For which I look'd, thou hadst perchance excused
The tarrying still." My leader part pursued
His way, the while I follow'd, answering him,
And adding thus : "Within that cave I deem,
Whereon so fixedly I hold my ken,
There is a spirit dwells, one of my blood,
Wailing the crime that costs him now so dear."

Then spake my master : "Let thy soul no more
Afflict itself no more for him. Direct elsewhere
Its thought, and leave him. At the bridge's foot

I mark'd how he did point with menacing look
 At thee, and heard him by the others named
 Geri of Bello. Thou so wholly then
 Wert busied with his spirit, who once ruled
 The towers of Hautefort, that thou lookedst not
 That way, ere he was gone." "Oh, guide beloved!
 His violent death yet unavenged," said I,
 "By any, who are partners in his shame,
 Made him contemptuous; therefore, as I think,
 He pass'd me speechless by: and, doing so,
 Hath made me more compassionate his fate."

So we discours'd to where the rock first show'd
 The other valley, had more light been there,
 E'en to the lowest depth. Soon as we came
 O'er the last cloister in the dismal rounds
 Of Malebolge, and the brotherhood
 Were to our view exposed, then many a dart
 Of sore lament assail'd me, headed all
 With points of thrilling pity, that I closed
 Both ears against the volley with mine hands.

As were the torment, if each lazar-house
 Of Valdichiana, in the sultry time
 'Twixt July and September, with the isle
 Sardinia and Maremma's pestilent fen,
 Had heap'd their maladies all in one fosse
 Together; such was here the torment: dire
 The stench, as issuing steams from fester'd limbs.

We on the utmost shore of the long rock
 Descended still to leftward. Then my sight
 Was livelier to explore the depth, wherein
 The minister of the most mighty Lord,
 All-searching Justice, dooms to punishment
 The forgers noted on her dread record.

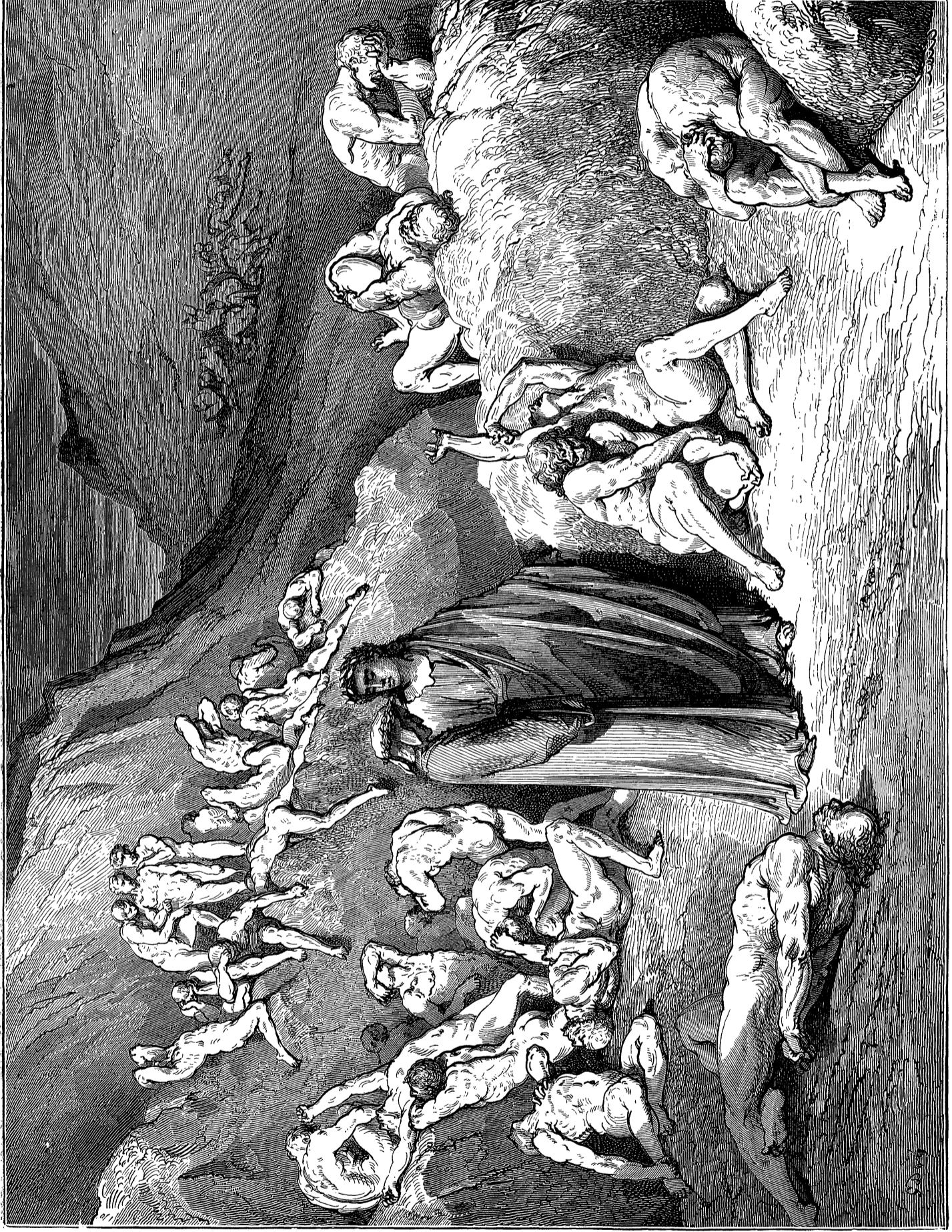
More rueful was it not methinks to see
 The nation in Ægina droop, what time
 Each living thing, e'en to the little worm,

All fell, so full of malice was the air
 (And afterwards, as bards of yore have told,
 The ancient people were restored anew
 From seed of emmets), than was here to see
 The spirits, that languish'd through the murky vale,
 Up-piled on many a stack. Confused they lay,
 One o'er the belly, o'er the shoulders one
 Roll'd of another; sideling crawl'd a third
 Along the dismal pathway. Step by step
 We journey'd on, in silence looking round,
 And listening those diseased, who strove in vain
 To lift their forms. Then two I mark'd, that sat
 Propt 'gainst each other, as two brazen pans
 Set to retain the heat. From head to foot,
 A tetter barked them round. Nor saw I e'er
 Groom currying so fast, for whom his lord
 Impatient waited, or himself perchance
 Tired with long watching, as of these each one
 Plied quickly his keen nails, through furiousness
 Of ne'er abated pruriency. The crust
 Came drawn from underneath in flakes, like scales
 Scraped from the bream, or fish of broader mail.

“Oh, thou! who with thy fingers rendest off
 Thy coat of proof,” thus spake my guide to one,
 “And sometimes makest tearing pincers of them,
 Tell me if any born of Latian land
 Be among these within; so may thy nails
 Serve thee for everlasting to this toil.”

“Both are of Latium,” weeping he replied
 “Whom tortured thus thou seest: but who art thou
 That hast inquired of us?” To whom my guide:
 “One that descend with this man, who yet lives,
 From rock to rock, and show him hell's abyss.”

Then started they asunder, and each turn'd
 Trembling toward us, with the rest, whose ear
 Those words redounding struck. To me my liege



The crust

Came drawn from underneath in flakes, like scales
Scraped from the bream, or fish of broader mail.



“That sprite of air is Schicchi; in like mood
Of random mischief vents he still his spite.”

Canto XXX., lines 33, 34

Address'd him: "Speak to them whate'er thou list."

And I therewith began: "So may no time
 Filch your remembrance from the thoughts of men
 In the upper world, but after many suns
 Survive it, as ye tell me, who ye are
 And of what race ye come. Your punishment,
 Unseemly and disgusting in its kind,
 Deter you not from opening thus much to me."

"Arezzo was my dwelling," answer'd one,
 "And me Albero of Sienna brought
 To die by fire: but that, for which I died,
 Leads me not here. True is, in sport I told him,
 That I had learn'd to wing my flight in air;
 And he, admiring much, as he was void
 Of wisdom, will'd me to declare to him
 The secret of mine art: and only hence,
 Because I made him not a Dædalus,
 Prevail'd on one supposed his sire to burn me,
 But Minos to this chasm, last of the ten,
 For that I practised alchemy on earth,
 Has doom'd me. Him no subterfuge eludes."

Then to the bard I spake: "Was ever race
 Light as Sienna's? Sure not France herself
 Can show a tribe so frivolous and vain."

The other leprous spirit heard my words,
 And thus return'd: "Be Stricca from this charge
 Exempted, he who knew so temperately
 To lay out fortune's gifts; and Niccolo,
 Who first the spice's costly luxury
 Discovered in that garden, where such seed
 Roots deepest in the soil: and be that troop
 Exempted, with whom Caccia of Asciano
 Lavish'd his vineyards and wide-spreading woods.
 And his rare wisdom Abbagliato show'd
 A spectacle for all. That thou mayst know
 Who seconds thee against the Siennese

Thus gladly, bend this way thy sharpen'd sight,
That well my face may answer to thy ken;
So shalt thou see I am Capocchio's ghost,
Who forged transmuted metals by the power
Of alchemy; and if I scan thee right,
Thou needs must well remember how I aped
Creative nature by my subtle art."



“That is the ancient soul
Of wretched Myrrha.”

Canto XXX., lines 38, 39.



“Oh senseless spirit! let thy horn for thee
Interpret: therewith vent thy rage, if rage
Or other passion wring thee.”

Canto XXXI., lines 64-66.

CANTO XXX.

ARGUMENT.

In the same gulf, other kinds of impostors, as those who have counterfeited the persons of others, or debased the current coin, or deceived by speech under false pretenses, are described as suffering various diseases. Simon of Troy, and Adamo of Brescia, mutually reproach each other with their several impostures.

WHAT time resentment burn'd in Juno's breast
For Semele against the Theban blood,
As more than once in dire mischance was rued;
Such fatal frenzy seized on Athamas,
That he his spouse beholding with a babe
Laden on either arm, "Spread out," he cried,
"The meshes, that I take the lioness
And the young lions at the pass": then forth
Stretch'd he his merciless talons, grasping one,
One helpless innocent, Learchus named,
Whom swinging down he dash'd upon a rock;
And with her other burden, self-destroy'd,
The hapless mother plunged. And when the pride
Of all presuming Troy fell from its height,
By fortune overwhelm'd, and the old king
With his realm perish'd; then did Hecuba,
A wretch forlorn and captive, when she saw
Polyxena first slaughter'd, and her son,
Her Polydorus, on the wild sea-beach
Next met the mourner's view, then reft of sense
Did she run barking even as a dog;
Such mighty power had grief to wrench her soul.
But ne'er the furies, or of Thebes, or Troy,
With such fell cruelty were seen, their goads
Infixing in the limbs of man or beast,

As now two pale and naked ghosts I saw,
 That gnarling wildly scamper'd like the swine
 Excluded from his sty. One reach'd Capocchio,
 And in the neck-joint sticking deep his fangs,
 Dragg'd him, that, o'er the solid pavement rubb'd
 His belly stretch'd out prone. The other shape,
 He of Arezzo, there left trembling, spake:
 "That sprite of air is Schicchi; in like mood
 Of random mischief vents he still his spite."

To whom I answering: "Oh! as thou dost hope
 The other may not flesh its jaws on thee,
 Be patient to inform us, who it is,
 Ere it speed hence." "That is the ancient soul
 Of wretched Myrrha," he replied, "who burn'd
 With most unholy flame for her own sire,
 And a false shape assuming, so perform'd
 The deed of sin; e'en as the other there,
 That onward passes, dared to counterfeit
 Donati's features, to feign'd testament
 The seal affixing, that himself might gain,
 For his own share, the lady of the herd."

When vanish'd the two furious shades, on whom
 Mine eye was held, I turn'd it back to view
 The other cursed spirits. One I saw
 In fashion like a lute, had but the groin
 Been sever'd where it meets the forked part.
 Swollen dropsy, disproportioning the limbs
 With ill-converted moisture, that the paunch
 Suits not the visage, open'd wide his lips,
 Gasping as in the hectic man for drought,
 One towards the chin, the other upward curl'd.

"Oh, ye! who in this world of misery,
 Wherefore I know not, are exempt from pain,"
 Thus he began, "Attentively regard
 Adamo's woe. When living, full supply
 Ne'er lack'd me of what most I coveted;

One drop of water now, alas! I crave.
 The rills that glitter down the grassy slopes
 Of Casentino, making fresh and soft
 The banks whereby they glide to Arno's stream,
 Stand ever in my view; and not in vain;
 For more the pictured semblance dries me up,
 Much more than the disease, which makes the flesh
 Desert these shrivel'd cheeks. So from the place,
 Where I transgress'd, stern justice urging me,
 Takes means to quicken more my laboring sighs.
 There is Romena, where I falsified
 The metal with the Baptist's form imprest,
 For which on earth I left my body burnt.
 But if I here might see the sorrowing soul
 Of Guido, Alessandro, or their brother,
 For Branda's limpid spring I would not change
 The welcome sight. One is e'en now within,
 If truly the mad spirits tell, that round
 Are wandering. But wherein besteads me that?
 My limbs are fetter'd. Were I but so light,
 That I each hundred years might move one inch,
 I had set forth already on this path,
 Seeking him out amidst the shapeless crew,
 Although eleven miles it wind, not less
 Than half of one across. They brought me down
 Among this tribe; induced by them, I stamp'd
 The florens with three carats of alloy."

"Who are that abject pair," I next inquired,
 "That closely bounding thee upon thy right
 Lie smoking, like a hand in winter steep'd
 In the chill stream?" "When to this gulf I dropp'd,"
 He answer'd, "here I found them: since that hour
 They have not turn'd, nor ever shall, I ween,
 Till Time hath run his course. One is that dame,
 The false accuser of the Hebrew youth;
 Sinon the other, that false Greek from Troy.

Sharp fever drains the reeky moistness out,
 In such a cloud unsteam'd." When that he heard,
 One, gall'd perchance to be so darkly named,
 With clench'd hand smote him on the braced paunch,
 That like a drum resounded: but forthwith
 Adamo smote him on the face, the blow
 Returning with his arm, that seem'd as hard.

"Though my o'erweighty limbs have ta'en from me
 The power to move," said he, "I have an arm
 At liberty for such employ." To whom
 Was answer'd: "When thou wentest to the fire,
 Thou hadst it not so ready at command,
 Then readier when it coin'd the impostor gold."

And thus the dropsied: "Ay, now speak'st thou true:
 But there thou gavest not such true testimony,
 When thou was question'd of the truth, at Troy."

"If I spake false, thou falsely stamp'dst the coin,"
 Said Sinon; "I am here for but one fault,
 And thou for more than any imp beside."

"Remember," he replied, "O perjured one!
 The horse remember, that did teem with death;
 And all the world be witness to thy guilt."

"To thine," return'd the Greek, "witness the thirst
 Whence thy tongue cracks, witness the fluid mound
 Rear'd by thy belly up before thine eyes,
 A mass corrupt." To whom the coiner thus:
 "Thy mouth gapes wide as ever to let pass
 Its evil saying. Me if thirst assails,
 Yet I am stuff with moisture. Thou art parch'd:
 Pain racks thy head: no urging wouldst thou need
 To make thee lap Narcissus' mirror up."

I was all fix'd to listen, when my guide
 Admonish'd: "Now beware. A little more
 And I do quarrel with thee." I perceived
 How angrily he spake, and towards him turn'd
 With shame so poignant, as remember'd yet

Confounds me. As a man that dreams of harm
Befallen him, dreaming wishes it a dream,
And that which is, desires as if it were not;
Such then was I, who, wanting power to speak,
Wish'd to excuse myself, and all the while
Excused me, though unweeting that I did.

“More grievous fault than thine has been, less shame,”
My master cried, “might expiate. Therefore cast
All sorrow from thy soul; and if again
Chance bring thee where like conference is held,
Think I am ever at thy side. To hear
Such wrangling is a joy for vulgar minds.”

CANTO XXXI.

ARGUMENT.

The poets, following the sound of a loud horn, are led by it to the ninth circle, in which there are four rounds, one enclosed within the other, and containing as many sorts of traitors ; but the present canto shows only that the circle is encompassed with giants, one of whom, Antæus, takes them both in his arms and places them at the bottom of the circle.

THE very tongue, whose keen reproof before
Had wounded me, that either cheek was stain'd,
Now minister'd my cure. So have I heard,
Achilles' and his father's javelin caused
Pain first, and then the boon of health restored.

Turning our back upon the vale of woe,
We cross'd the encircled mound in silence. There
Was less than day and less than night, that far
Mine eye advanced not : but I heard a horn
Sounded so loud, the peal it rang had made
The thunder feeble. Following its course
The adverse way, my strained eyes were bent
On that one spot. So terrible a blast
Orlando blew not, when that dismal rout
O'erthrew the host of Charlemain, and quench'd
His saintly warfare. Thitherward not long
My head was raised, when many a lofty tower
Methought I spied. "Master," said I, "what land
Is this?" He answer'd straight: "too long a space
Of intervening darkness has thine eye
To traverse: thou hast therefore widely err'd
In thy imagining. Thither arrived

Thou well shalt see how distance can delude
The sense. A little therefore urge thee on."

Then tenderly he caught me by the hand;
"Yet know," said he, "ere further we advance,
That it less strange may seem, these are not towers,
But giants. In the pit they stand immersed,
Each from his navel downward, round the bank."

As when a fog disperseth gradually,
Our vision traces what the mist involves
Condensed in air; so piercing through the gross
And gloomy atmosphere, as more and more
We near'd toward the brink, mine error fled
And fear came o'er me. As with circling round
Of turrets, Monteregion crowns his walls,
E'en thus the shore, encompassing the abyss,
Was turreted with giants, half their length
Uprearing, horrible, whom Jove from heaven
Yet threatens, when his muttering thunder rolls.

Of one already I descried the face,
Shoulders, and breast, and of the belly huge
Great part, and both arms down along the ribs.

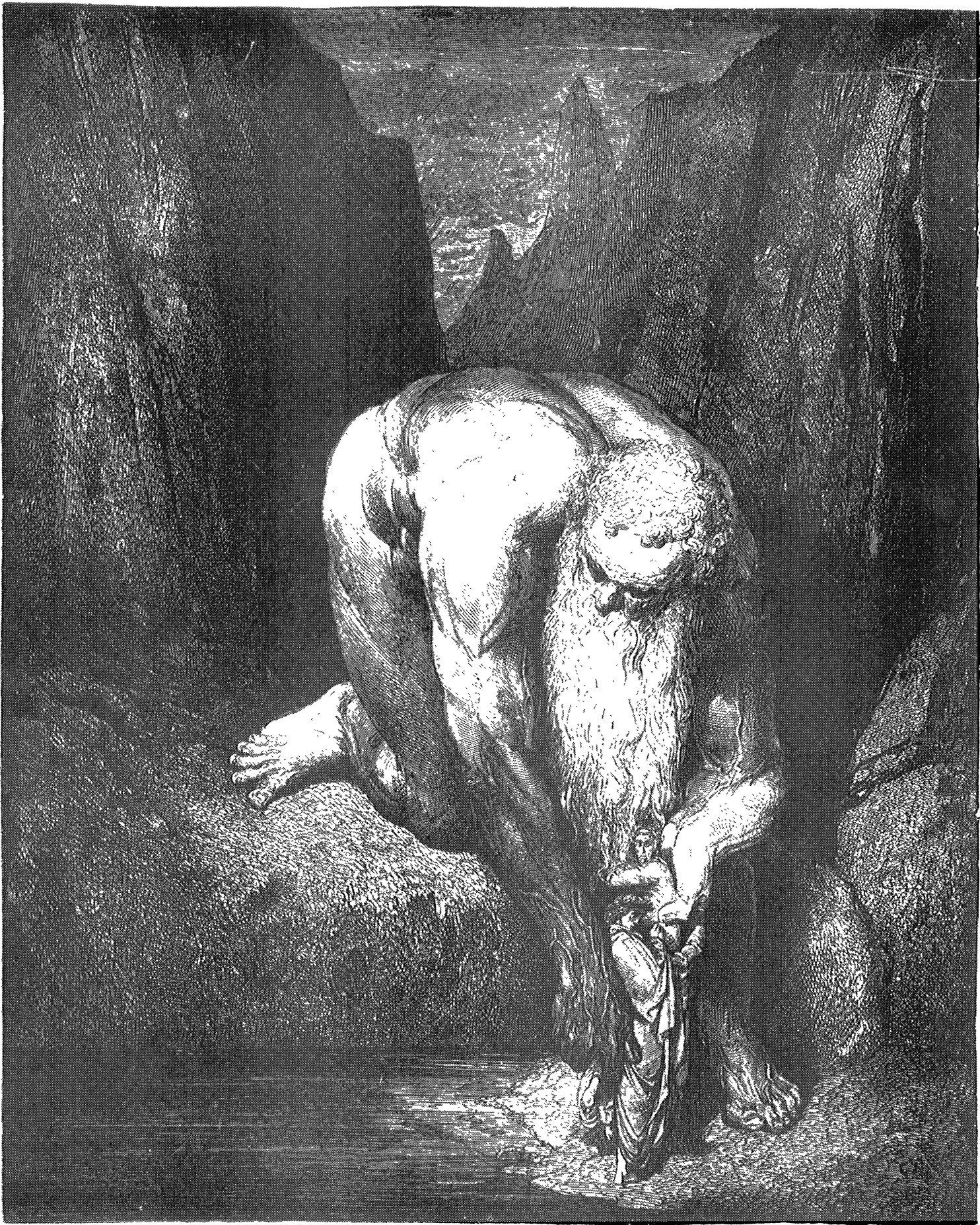
All-teeming Nature, when her plastic hand
Left framing of these monsters, did display
Past doubt her wisdom, taking from mad War
Such slaves to do his bidding; and if she
Repent her not of the elephant and whale,
Who ponders well confesses her therein
Wiser and more discreet; for when brute force
And evil will are back'd with subtlety,
Resistance none avails. His visage seem'd
In length and bulk as doth the pine that tops
Saint Peter's Roman fane; and the other bones
Of like protortion, so that from above
The bank, that girdled him below, such height
Arose his stature, that three Friezelanders
Had striven in vain to reach but to his hair.

Full thirty ample palms was he exposed
 Downward from whence a man his garment loops.
 "Raphel baï ameth, sabì almì":
 So shouted his fierce lips, which sweeter hymns
 Became not; and my guide address'd him thus:
 "Oh, senseless spirit! let thy horn for thee
 Interpret: therewith vent thy rage, if rage
 Or other passion wring thee. Search thy neck,
 There shalt thou find the belt that binds it on.
 Spirit confused! lo, on thy mighty breast
 Where hangs the baldrick!" Then to me he spake:
 "He doth accuse himself. Nimrod is this,
 Through whose ill counsel in the world no more
 One tongue prevails. But pass we on, nor waste
 Our words; for so each language is to him,
 As his to others, understood by none."

Then to the leftward turning, sped we forth
 And at a sling's throw found another shade
 Far fiercer and more huge. I cannot say
 What master hand had girt him; but he held
 Behind the right arm fetter'd, and before,
 The other, with a chain, that fasten'd him
 From the neck down; and five times round his form
 Apparent met the wreathed links. "This proud one
 Would of his strength against almighty Jove
 Make trial," said my guide: "whence he is thus
 Requited: Ephialtes him they call.
 Great was his prowess, when the giants brought
 Fear on the gods: those arms, which then he plied,
 Now moves he never." Forthwith I return'd:
 "Fain would I, if 'twere possible, mine eyes,
 Of Briareus immeasurable, gain'd
 Experience next." He answer'd: "Thou shalt see
 Not far from hence Antæus, who both speaks
 And is unfetter'd, who shall place us there
 Where guilt is at its depth. Far onward stands



“This proud one
Would of his strength against almighty Jove
Make trial.”



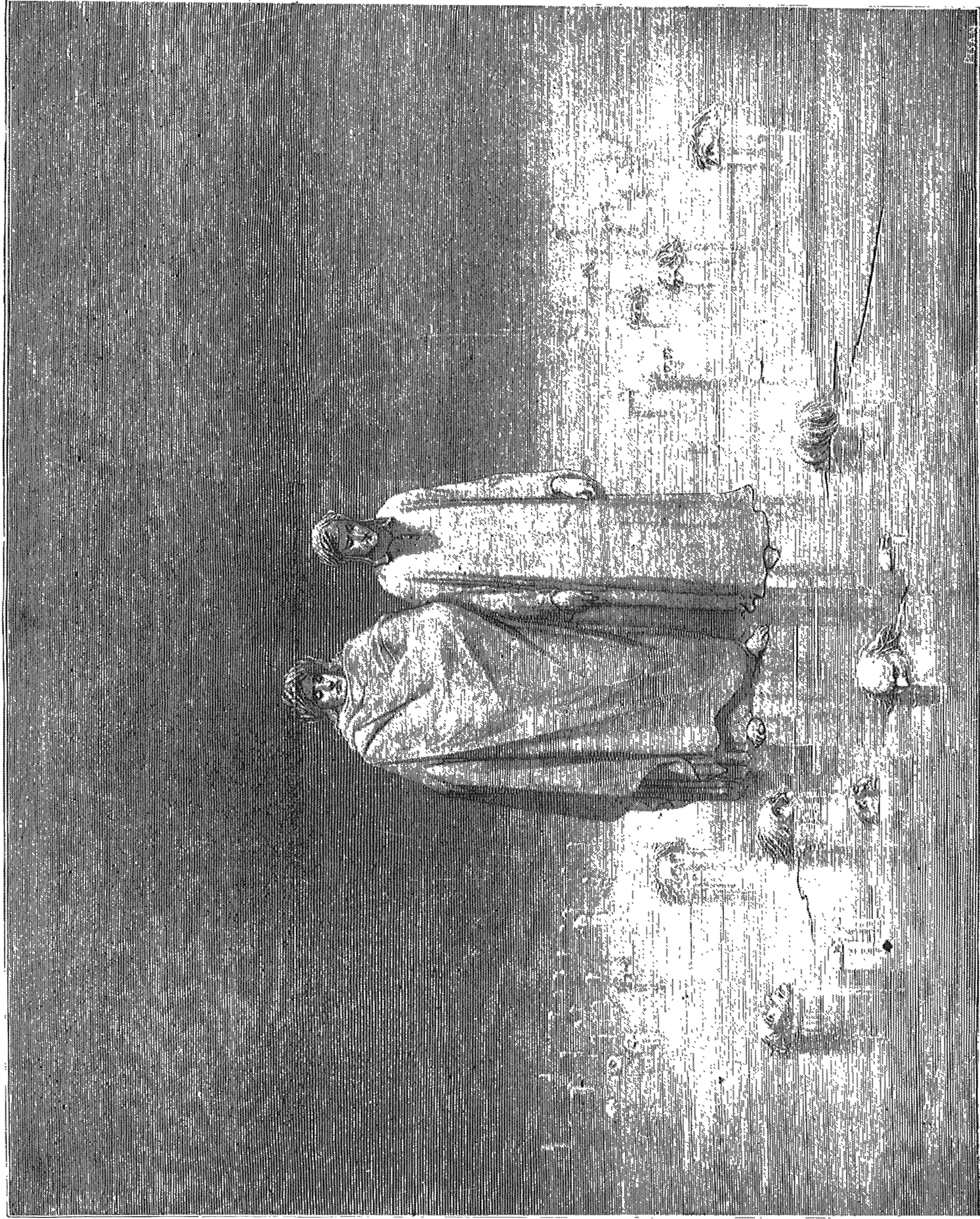
Yet in the abyss, •
That Lucifer with Judas low ingulfs,
Lightly he placed us.

Canto XXXI., lines 133-135.

Whom thou wouldst fain behold, in chains, and made
 Like to this spirit, save that in his looks
 More fell he seems." By violent earthquake rock'd
 Ne'er shook a tower, so reeling to its base,
 As Ephialtes. More than ever then
 I dreaded death; nor than the terror more
 Had needed, had I not seen the cords
 That held him fast. We, straightway journeying on,
 Came to Antæus, who, five ells complete
 Without the head, forth issued from the cave.

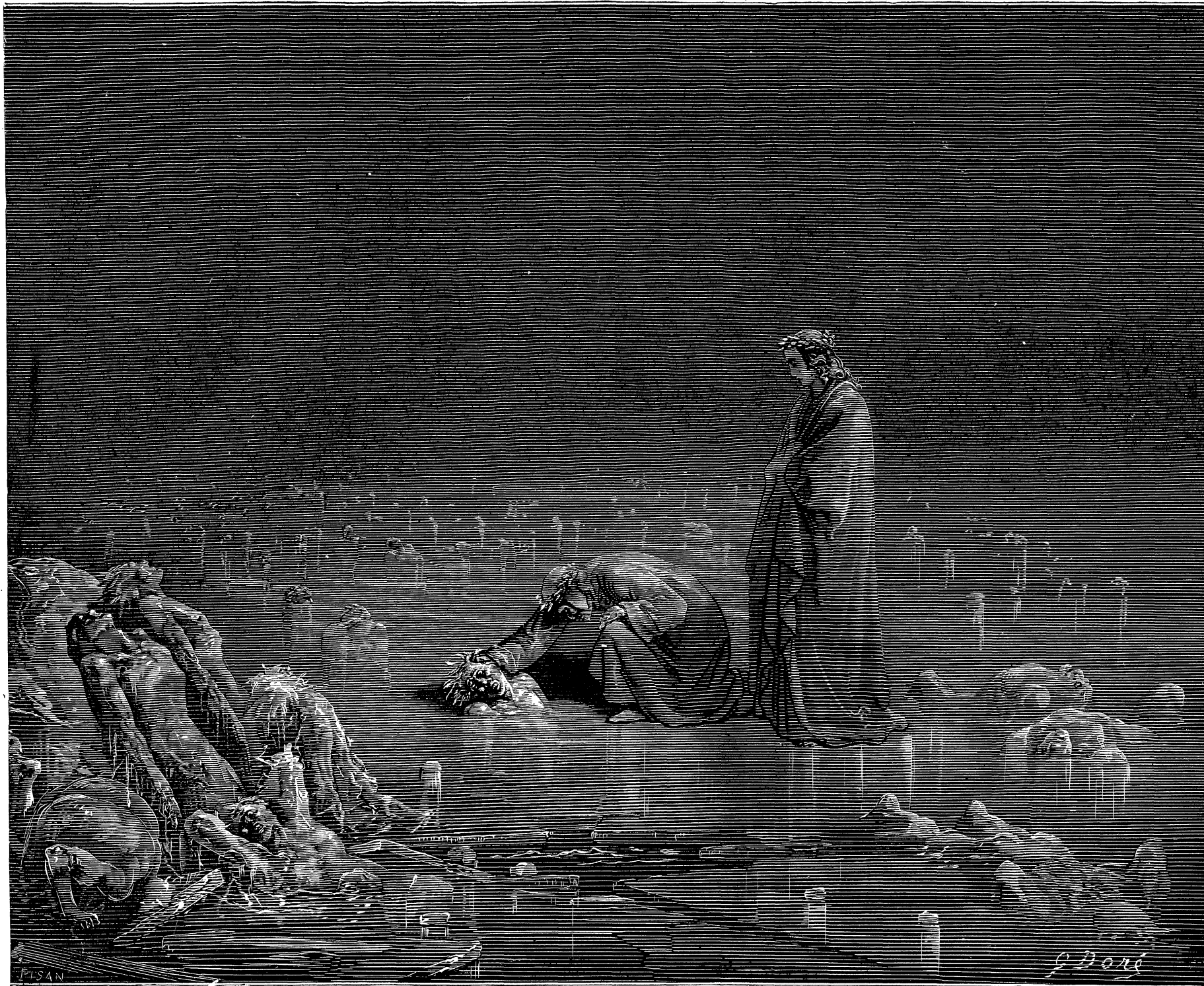
"Oh, thou, who in the fortunate vale, that made
 Great Scipio heir of glory, when his sword
 Drove back the troop of Hannibal in flight,
 Who thence of old didst carry for thy spoil
 An hundred lions; and if thou hadst fought
 In the high conflict on thy brethren's side,
 Seems as men yet believed, that through thine arm
 The sons of earth had conquer'd; now vouchsafe
 To place us down beneath, where numbing cold
 Locks up Cocytus. Force not that we crave
 Or Tityus' help or Typhon's. Here is one
 Can give what in this realm ye covet. Stoop
 Therefore, nor scornfully distort thy lip.
 He in the upper world can yet bestow
 Renown on thee; for he doth live, and looks
 For life yet longer, if before the time
 Grace call him not unto herself." Thus spake
 The teacher. He in haste forth stretch'd his hands
 And caught my guide. Alcides whilom felt
 That grapple, straiten'd sore. Soon as my guide
 Had felt it, he bespake me thus: "This way,
 That I may clasp thee"; then so caught me up,
 That we were both one burden. As appears
 The tower of Carisenda, from beneath
 Where it doth lean, if chance a passing cloud
 So sail across, that opposite it hangs;

Such then Antæus seem'd, as at mine ease
I mark'd him stooping. I were fain at times
To have past another way. Yet in the abyss,
That Lucifer with Judas low ingulfs,
Lightly he plac'd us; nor, there leaning, stay'd;
But rose, as in a barque the stately mast.



“Look how thou walkest.”

Canto XXXII., line 20.



Then seizing on his hinder scalp I cried:
"Name thee, or not a hair shall tarry here."

Canto XXXII, lines 97, 98.

CANTO XXXII.

ARGUMENT.

This canto treats of the first, and, in part, of the second of those rounds, into which the ninth and last, or frozen circle, is divided. In the former, called Caïna, Dante finds Camicione de' Pazzi, who gives him an account of other sinners who are there punished; and in the next, named Antenora, he hears in like manner from Bocca degli Abbati who his fellow-sufferers are.

COULD I command rough rhymes and hoarse, to suit
That hole of sorrow o'er which every rock
His firm abutment rears, then might the vein
Of fancy rise full springing; but not mine
Such measures, and with faltering awe I touch
The mighty theme; for to describe the depth
Of all the universe, is no emprise
To jest with, and demands a tongue not used
To infant babbling. But let them assist
My song, the tuneful maidens, by whose aid
Amphion wall'd in Thebes; so with the truth
My speech shall best accord. Oh, ill-starr'd folk,
Beyond all others wretched! who abide
In such a mansion, as scarce thought finds words
To speak of, better had ye here on earth
Been flocks, or mountain goats. As down we stood
In the dark pit beneath the giants' feet,
But lower far than they, and I did gaze
Still on the lofty battlement, a voice
Bespake me thus: "Look how thou walkest. Take
Good heed, thy soles do tread not on the heads
Of thy poor brethren." Thereupon I turn'd,

And saw before and underneath my feet
 A lake, whose frozen surface liker seem'd
 To glass than water. Not so thick a veil
 In winter e'er hath Austrian Danube spread
 O'er his still course, nor Tanais far remote
 Under the chilling sky. Roll'd o'er that mass
 Had Tabernich or Pietrapana fallen,
 Not e'en its rim had creak'd. As peeps the frog
 Croaking above the wave, what time in dreams
 The village gleaner oft pursues her toil,
 So, to where modest shame appears, thus low
 Blue pinch'd and shrined in ice the spirits stood,
 Moving their teeth in shrill note like the stork.
 His face each downward held; their mouth the cold,
 Their eyes express'd the dolor of their heart.

A space I look'd around, then at my feet
 Saw two so strictly join'd, that of their head
 The very hairs were mingled. "Tell me ye,
 Whose bosoms thus together press," said I,
 "Who are ye?" At that sound their necks they bent;
 And when their looks were lifted up to me,
 Straightway their eyes, before all moist within,
 Distill'd upon their lips, and the frost bound
 The tears betwixt those orbs, and held them there.
 Plank unto plank hath never cramp closed up
 So stoutly. Whence, like two enraged goats,
 They clash'd together: them such fury seized.

And one, from whom the cold both ears had reft,
 Exclaim'd, still looking downward: "Why on us
 Dost speculate so long? If thou wouldst know
 Who are these two, the valley, whence his wave
 Bisenzio slopes, did for its master own
 Their sire Alberto, and next him themselves.
 They from one body issued: and throughout
 Caïna thou mayst search, nor find a shade
 More worthy in congealment to be fix'd;

Not him, whose breast and shadow Arthur's hand
 At that one blow dissever'd; not Focaccia;
 No, not this spirit, whose o'erjutting head
 Obstructs my onward view: he bore the name
 Of Mascheroni: Tuscan if thou be,
 Well knowest who he was. And to cut short
 All further question, in my form behold
 What once was Camiccione. I await
 Carlino here my kinsman, whose deep guilt
 Shall wash out mine." A thousand visages
 Then mark'd I, which the keen and eager cold
 Had shaped into a doggish grin; whence creeps
 A shivering horror o'er me, at the thought
 Of those frore shallows. While we journey'd on
 Toward the middle, at whose point unites
 All heavy substance, and I trembling went
 Through that eternal chillness, I know not
 If will it were, or destiny, or chance,
 But, passing 'midst the heads, my foot did strike
 With violent blow against the face of one.

"Wherefore dost bruise me?" weeping he exclaim'd.
 "Unless thy errand be some fresh revenge
 For Montaperto, wherefore troublest me?"

I thus: "Instructor, now await me here,
 That I through him may rid me of my doubt:
 Thenceforth what haste thou wilt." The teacher paused;
 And to that shade I spake, who bitterly
 Still cursed me in his wrath. "What art thou? speak,
 That raillest thus on others?" He replied:
 'Now who art thou that, smiting others' cheeks,
 Through Antenora roams, with such force
 As were past sufferance, wert thou living still?"

"And I am living, to thy joy perchance,"
 Was my reply, "if fame be dear to thee,
 That with the rest I may thy name enroll."
 "The contrary of what I covet most,"

Said he, "thou tender'st: hence! nor vex me more.
Ill knowst thou to flatter in this vale."

Then seizing on his hinder scalp I cried:
"Name thee, or not a hair shall tarry here."

"Rend all away," he answer'd, "yet for that
I will not tell, nor show thee, who I am,
Though at my head thou pluck a thousand times."

Now I had grasp'd his tresses, and stript off
More than one tuft, he barking, with his eyes
Drawn in and downward, when another cried:
"What ails thee, Bocca? Sound not loud enough
Thy chattering teeth, but thou must bark oughtright?
What devil wrings thee?" "Now," said I, "be dumb,
Accursed traitor! To thy shame, of thee
True tidings will I bear." "Off!" he replied;
"Tell what thou list: but, as thou 'scape from hence,
To speak of him whose tongue has been so glib,
Forget not: here he wails the Frenchman's gold.
'Him of Duera,' thou canst say, 'I mark'd,
Where the starved sinners pine.' If thou be ask'd
What other shade was with them, at thy side
Is Beccaria, whose red gorge distain'd
The biting axe of Florence. Further on,
If I misdeem not, Soldanieri bides,
With Ganellon, and Tribaldello, him
Who oped Faenza when the people slept."

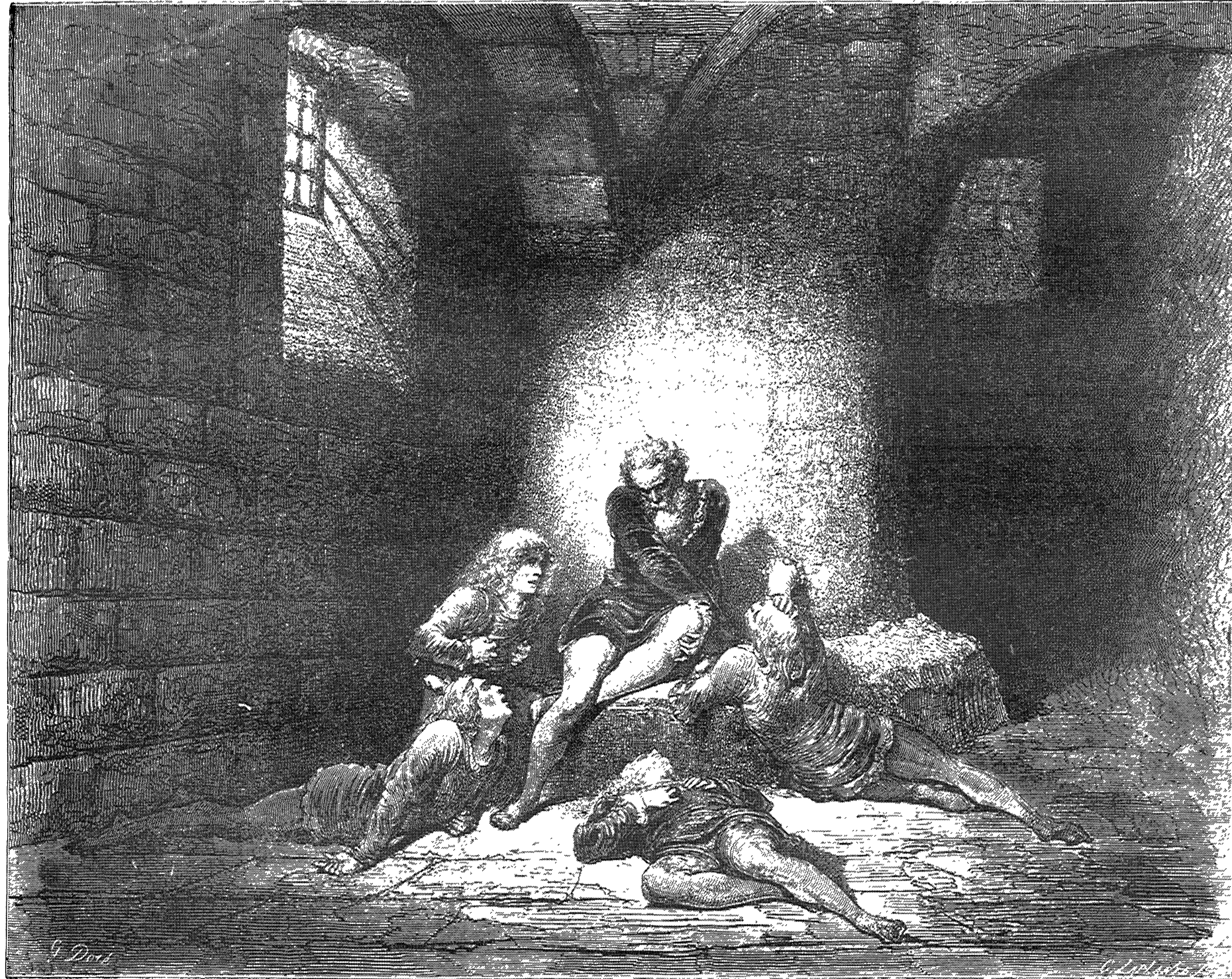
We now had left him, passing on our way,
When I beheld two spirits by the ice
Pent in one hollow, that the head of one
Was cowl unto the other; and as bread
Is raven'd up through hunger, the uppermost
Did so apply his fangs to the other's brain,
Where the spine joins it. Not more furiously
On Menalippus' temples Tydeus gnawed,
Than on that skull and on its garbage he.

"Oh, thou! who show'st so beastly sign of hate



Not more furiously
On Menalippus' temples Tydeus gnawed,
Than on that skull and on its garbage he.

Canto XXXII., lines 127-129



Then, not to make them sadder, I kept down
My spirit in stillness.

Canto XXXIII. lines 62. 69

'Gainst him thou prey'st on, let me hear," said I,
"The cause, on such condition, that if right
Warrant thy grievance, knowing who ye are,
And what the color of his sinning was,
I may repay thee in the world above,
If that, wherewith I speak, be moist so long."

CANTO XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

The poet is told by Count Ugolino de' Gherardeschi of the cruel manner in which he and his children were famished in the tower at Pisa, by command of the Archbishop Ruggieri. He next discourses of the third round, called Ptolomea, wherein those are punished who have betrayed others under the semblance of kindness; and among these he finds the Friar Alberigo de' Manfredi, who tells him of one whose soul was already tormented in that place, though his body appeared still to be alive upon the earth, being yielded up to the governance of a fiend.

HIS jaws uplifting from their fell repast
That sinner wiped them on the hairs o' the head,
Which he behind had mangled, then began:
"Thy will obeying, I call up afresh
Sorrow past cure; which, but to think of, wrings
My heart, or ere I tell on 't. But if words,
That I may utter, shall prove seed to bear
Fruit of eternal infamy to him,
The traitor whom I gnaw at, thou at once
Shalt see me speak and weep. Who thou mayst be
I know not, nor how here below art come:
But Florentine thou seemest of a truth,
When I do hear thee. Know, I was on earth
Count Ugolino, and the Archbishop he
Ruggieri. Why I neighbor him so close,
Now list. That through effect of his ill thoughts
In him my trust reposing, I was ta'en
And after murder'd, need is not I tell.
What therefore thou canst not have heard, that is,
How cruel was the murder, shalt thou hear,
And know if he have wrong'd me. A small grate
Within that mew, which for my sake the name
Of famine bears, where others yet must pine,

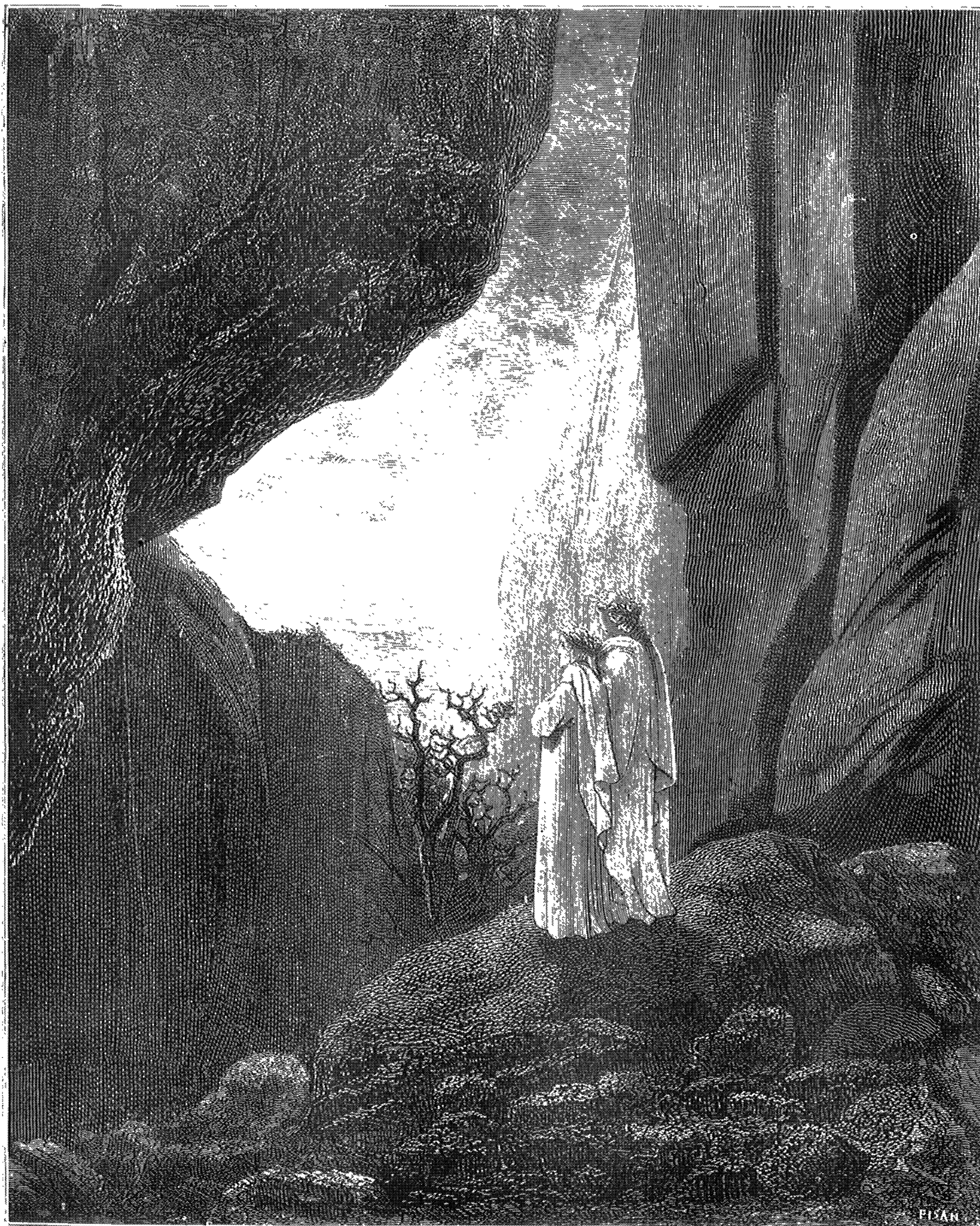
Already through its opening several moons
Had shown me, when I slept the evil sleep
That from the future tore the curtain off.
This one, methought, as master of the sport,
Rode forth to chase the gaunt wolf, and his whelps,
Unto the mountain which forbids the sight
Of Lucca to the Pisan. With lean braches
Inquisitive and keen, before him ranged
Lanfranchi with Sismondi and Gualandi.
After short course the father and the sons
Seem'd tired and lagging, and methought I saw
The sharp tusks gore their sides. When I awoke,
Before the dawn, amid their sleep I heard
My sons (for they were with me) weep and ask
For bread. Right cruel art thou, if no pang
Thou feel at thinking what my heart foretold;
And if not now, why use thy tears to flow?
Nor had they waken'd; and the hour drew near
When they were wont to bring us food; the mind
Of each misgave him through his dream, and I
Heard, at its outlet underneath lock'd up
The horrible tower: whence, uttering not a word,
I look'd upon the visage of my sons.
I wept not: so all stone I felt within,
They wept: and one my little Anselm, cried,
'Thou lookest so! Father, what ails thee?' Yet
I shed no tear, nor answer'd all that day
Nor the next night, until another sun
Came out upon the world. When a faint beam
Had to our doleful prison made its way,
And in four countenances I descried
The image of my own, on either hand
Through agony I bit; and they, who thought
I did it through desire of feeding, rose
O' the sudden and cried, 'Father, we should grieve
Far less, if thou wouldst eat of us: thou gavest

These weeds of miserable flesh we wear;
And do thou strip them off from us again.
Then, not to make them sadder, I kept down
My spirit in stillness. That day and the next
We all were silent. Ah, obdurate earth!
Why open'st not upon us? When we came
To the fourth day, then Gaddo at my feet
Outstretch'd did fling him, crying, 'Hast no help
For me, my father?' There he died; and e'en
Plainly as thou seest me, saw I the three
Fall one by one 'twixt the fifth day and sixth:
Whence I betook me, now grown blind, to grope
Over them all, and for three days aloud
Call'd on them who were dead. Then, fasting got
The mastery of grief." Thus having spoke,
Once more upon the wretched skull his teeth
He fasten'd like a mastiff's 'gainst the bone,
Firm and unyielding. Oh, thou Pisa! shame
Of all the people, who their dwelling make
In that fair region, where the Italian voice
Is heard; since that thy neighbors are so slack
To punish, from their deep foundations rise
Capraia and Gorgona, and dam up
The mouth of Arno; that each soul in thee
May perish in the waters. What if fame
Reported that thy castles were betray'd
By Ugolino, yet no right hadst thou
To stretch his children on the rack. For them,
Brigata, Ugucione, and the pair
Of gentle ones, of whom my song hath told,
Their tender years, thou modern Thebes, did make
Uncapable of guilt. Onward we pass'd,
Where others, scarf'd in rugged folds of ice,
Not on their feet were turn'd, but each revers'd.
There, very weeping suffers not to weep;
For, at their eyes, grief, seeking passage, finds



“Lo!” he exclaimed, “lo! Dis; and lo! the place,
Where thou hast need to arm thy heart with strength.”

Canto XXXIV., lines 20, 21.



By that hidden way
My guide and I did enter, to return
To the fair world.

Canto XXXIV., lines 127-129.

Impediment, and rolling inward turns
 For increase of sharp anguish: the first tears
 Hang cluster'd, and like crystal vizors show,
 Under the socket brimming all the cup.

Now though the cold had from my face dislodged
 Each feeling, as 'twere callous, yet me seem'd
 Some breath of wind I felt. "Whence cometh this,"
 Said I, "my master? Is not here below
 All vapor quench'd?" "Thou shalt be speedily,"
 He answer'd, "where thine eyes shall tell thee whence,
 The cause descrying of this airy shower."

Then cried out one, in the chill crust who mourn'd:
 "Oh, souls! so cruel, that the farthest post
 Hath been assign'd you, from this face remove
 The harden'd veil; that I may vent the grief
 Impregnate at my heart, some little space,
 Ere it congeal again." I thus replied:
 "Say who thou wast, if thou wouldst have mine aid;
 And if I extricate thee not, far down
 As to the lowest ice may I descend."

"The friar Alberigo," answer'd he,
 "Am I, who from the evil garden pluck'd
 Its fruitage, and am here repaid, the date
 More luscious for my fig." "Ah!" I exclaim'd,
 "Art thou too dead?" "How in the world aloft
 It fareth with my body," answer'd he,
 "I am right ignorant. Such privilege
 Hath Ptolomea, that oft-times the soul
 Drops hither, ere by Atropos divorced.
 And that thou mayst wipe out more willingly
 The glazed tear-drops that o'erlay mine eyes,
 Know that the soul, that moment she betrays,
 As I did, yields her body to a fiend
 Who after moves and governs it at will,
 Till all its time be rounded: headlong she
 Falls to this cistern. And perchance above

Doth yet appear the body of a ghost,
 Who here behind me winters. Him thou know'st,
 If thou but newly art arrived below.
 The years are many that have past away,
 Since to this fastness Branca Doria came."

"Now," answer'd I, "methinks thou mockest me;
 For Branca Doria never yet hath died,
 But doth all natural functions of a man,
 Eats, drinks, and sleeps, and putteth raiment on."

He thus: "Not yet unto that upper fosse
 By th' evil talons guarded, where the pitch
 Tenacious boils, had Michel Zanche reach'd,
 When this one left a demon in his stead
 In his own body, and of one his kin,
 Who with him treachery wrought. But now put forth
 Thy hand, and ope mine eyes." I oped them not.
 Ill manners were best courtesy to him.

Ah, Genoese! men perverse in every way,
 With every foulness stain'd, why from the earth
 Are ye not cancell'd? Such a one of yours
 I with Romagna's darkest spirit found,
 As for his doings, even now in soul
 Is in Cocytus plunged, and yet doth seem
 In body still alive upon the earth.

CANTO XXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

In the fourth and last round of the ninth circle, those who have betrayed their benefactors are wholly covered with ice. And in the midst is Lucifer, at whose back Dante and Virgil ascend, till by a secret path they reach the surface of the other hemisphere of the earth, and once more obtain sight of the stars.

“THE banners of Hell’s Monarch do come forth
Toward us; therefore look,” so spake my guide,
“If thou discern him.” As, when breathes a cloud
Heavy and dense, or when the shades of night
Fall on our hemisphere, seems view’d from far
A windmill, which the blast stirs briskly round;
Such was the fabric then methought I saw.

To shield me from the wind, forthwith I drew
Behind my guide: no covert else was there.

Now came I (and with fear I bid my strain
Record the marvel) where the souls were all
Whelm’d underneath, transparent, as through glass
Pellucid the frail stem. Some prone were laid;
Others stood upright, this upon the soles,
That on his head, a third with face to feet
Arch’d like a bow. When to the point we came,
Whereat my guide was pleased that I should see
The creature eminent in beauty once,
He from before me stepp’d and made me pause.

“Lo!” he exclaim’d, “lo! Dis; and lo! the place
Where thou hast need to arm thy heart with strength.”

How frozen and how faint I then became,
Ask me not, reader! for I write it not;
Since words would fail to tell thee of my state.
I was not dead nor living. Think thyself,

If quick conception work in thee at all,
How I did feel. That emperor, who sways
The realm of sorrow, at mid breast from the ice
Stood forth: and I in stature am more like
A giant, than the giants are his arms.
Mark now how great that whole must be, which suits
With such a part. If he were beautiful
As he is hideous now, and yet did dare
To scowl upon his Maker, well from him
May all our misery flow. Oh, what a sight!
How passing strange it seem'd, when I did spy
Upon his head three faces: one in front
Of hue vermilion, the other two with this
Midway each shoulder join'd and at the crest;
The right 'twixt wan and yellow seem'd; the left
To look on, such as come from whence old Nile
Stoops to the lowlands. Under each shot forth
Two mighty wings, enormous as became
A bird so vast. Sails never such I saw
Outstretch'd on the wide sea. No plumes had they,
But were in texture like a bat; and these
He flapped i' th' air, that from him issued still
Three winds, wherewith Cocytus to its depth
Was frozen. At six eyes he wept: the tears
Adown three chins distill'd with bloody foam,
At every mouth his teeth a sinner champ'd,
Bruised as with ponderous engine; so that three
Were in this guise tormented. But far more
Than from that gnawing, was the foremost pang'd
By the fierce rending, whence oft-times the back
Was stript of all its skin. "That upper spirit,
Who hath worst punishment," so spake my guide,
"Is Judas, he that hath his head within
And plies the feet without. Of th' other two,
Whose heads are under, from the murky jaw
Who hangs, is Brutus: lo! how he doth writhe

And speaks not. The other, Cassius, that appears
So large of limb. But night now re-ascends ;
And it is time for parting. All is seen."

I clipp'd him round the neck ; for so he bade :
And noting time and place, he, when the wings
Enough were oped, caught fast the shaggy sides,
And down from pile to pile descending stepp'd
Between the thick fell and the jagged ice.

Soon as he reach'd the point, whereat the thigh
Upon the swelling of the haunches turns,
My leader there, with pain and struggling hard,
Turn'd round his head where his feet stood before,
And grappled at the fell as one who mounts ;
That into hell methought we turn'd again.

"Expect that by such stairs as these," thus spake
The teacher, panting like a man forespent,
"We must depart from evil so extreme" :
Then at a rocky opening issued forth,
And placed me on the brink to sit, next join'd
With wary step my side. I raised mine eyes,
Believing that I Lucifer should see
Where he was lately left, but saw him now
With legs held upward. Let the grosser sort,
Who see not what the point was I had past,
Bethink them if sore toil oppress'd me then.

"Arise," my master cried, "upon thy feet.
The way is long, and much uncouth the road ;
And now within one hour and half of noon
The sun returns." It was no palace hall
Lofty and luminous wherein we stood,
But natural dungeon, where ill-footing was
And scant supply of light. "Ere from the abyss
I separate," thus when risen I began :
"My guide! vouchsafe few words to set me free
From error's thraldom. Where is now the ice?
How standeth he in posture thus reversed?"

And how from eve to morn in space so brief
Hath the sun made his transit?" He in few
Thus answering spake: "Thou deemest thou art still
On the other side the center, where I grasp'd
The abhorred worm that boreth through the world.
Thou wast on the other side, so long as I
Descended; when I turn'd, thou didst o'erpass
That point, to which from every part is dragg'd
All heavy substance. Thou art now arrived
Under the hemisphere opposed to that,
Which the great continent doth overspread,
And underneath whose canopy expired
The Man, that was born sinless and so lived.
Thy feet are planted on the smallest sphere,
Whose other aspect is Judecca. Morn
Here rises, when there evening sets: and he,
Whose shaggy pile we scaled, yet standeth fix'd,
As at the first. On this part he fell down
From Heaven; and th' earth, here prominent before,
Through fear of him did veil her with the sea,
And to our hemisphere retired. Perchance,
To shun him, was the vacant space left here,
By what of firm land on this side appears,
That sprang aloof." There is a place beneath,
From Beelzebub as distant, as extends
The vaulted tomb; discover'd not by sight,
But by the sound of brooklet, that descends
This way along the hollow of a rock,
Which, as it winds with no precipitous course,
The wave hath eaten. By that hidden way
My guide and I did enter, to return
To the fair world: and heedless of repose
We climb'd, he first, I following his steps,
Till on our view the beautiful lights of heaven
Dawn'd through a circular opening in the cave;
Thence issuing we again beheld the stars.



Thence issuing we again beheld the stars.

Canto XXXIV., line 133.

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